



\$1.1 TRILLION SPENDING BILL CRUISES THROUGH US HOUSE

The reflecting pool in front of the U.S. Capitol building is frozen over in Washington. The House voted overwhelmingly Wednesday, 359-67, to approve a \$1.1 trillion spending bill for the current fiscal year.

(AP Photo/ Evan Vucci)

JONATHAN WEISMAN
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WASHINGTON - The House voted overwhelmingly Wednesday, 359-67, to approve a \$1.1 trillion spending bill for the current fiscal year, shrugging off the angry threats of Tea Party activists and conservative groups whose power has ebbed as Congress has moved toward fiscal cooperation.

The legislation, 1,582 pages in length and unveiled only two nights ago, embodies precisely what many House Republicans have railed against since the Tea Party movement began, a massive bill dropped in the cover of darkness and voted on before lawmakers could possibly have read it. The conservative political action committee Club For Growth denounced it and

said a vote for it would hurt any lawmaker's conservative scorecard. Heritage Action, the political arm of the Heritage Foundation, castigated it as a profligate budget buster that is returning Washington to its free-spending ways. "Has Congress learned nothing from the Obamacare disaster?" said Jenny Beth Martin, national coordinator of the Tea Party Pa-

triot. "We need members in the House and the Senate who are willing to keep their campaign promises, stand up for the people and protect Americans from Washington's tax, borrow, spend and spend and spend mentality." The response in the Republican-led House was a collective shrug, with 166 Republicans voting for it and 64 opposing it. The Senate,

controlled by Democrats, is expected to pass it easily later this week. "If I started voting how they want me to, versus what I think is right, then they've already won," said Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, who is dealing with one of the best financed Tea Party challenges of this campaign year.

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DAVOS FORUM TO FOCUS ON FINANCE AND CONFLICTS

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BANK OF AMERICA 4Q EARNINGS JUMP NEARLY FIVE-FOLD

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United States pledges \$380 million in relief aid for Syria

MICHAEL R. GORDON
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KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait - U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry pledged \$380 million in new assistance Wednesday to help civilians who are suffering because of the civil war in Syria.

The pledge came as Ban Ki-moon, the U.N. secretary-general, who is chairman of the donors' conference here, said that \$6.5 billion was needed to provide medical care, food, water and shelter for Syrian refugees and civilians inside

the country through 2014. That is the largest appeal for assistance in the history of the United Nations. It comes as the number of Syrian refugees has grown and conditions inside the country have dramatically deteriorated.

The session was held in a lavish conference center, which was only recently completed. But as the offers of aid rolled in, several factors continued to raise concerns. First, Kerry warned that the new aid would not be sufficient unless President Bashar Assad stopped "using starvation as a weapon of war" and his forces allowed international aid to reach besieged areas, including the Damascus suburb of East Ghouta. On Monday, Kerry and his Russian counterpart, Sergey V. Lavrov, said that pressing the Syrian government and the opposition to allow access to besieged areas would be a major objective of a peace conference on Syria that is to begin on Jan. 22 in Switzerland.

"If the regime can allow access to United Nations and international weapon inspectors, surely it can do the same for neutral international humanitarian assistance," Kerry said.

Kerry said Assad's foreign minister would be visiting Moscow soon to consult

with the Kremlin on the peace conference. He added that he planned to discuss the issue of humanitarian access again by phone with Lavrov as he flew back Wednesday to Washington.

But Kerry did not identify any punitive measures - economic, diplomatic or military - that might be taken if the Assad government refused to heed appeals to provide humanitarian access or did so intermittently. Kerry later told reporters that the State Department was examining "a whole set of different options" but that they were "not ready for prime time."

Another concern is that in the past, not all donor nations have followed through on their pledges. Only about 70 percent of the funding sought by the United Nations for Syria in 2013 was actually provided. Amnesty International said earlier this month that the United Arab Emirates, one of the richest Arab countries, "made promises on aid that failed to fully materialize." □



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov before the start of their meeting at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Paris, Jan. 13, 2014. The Syrian government has told Russia that it is prepared to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to some besieged areas in Syria, Russian and American diplomats said this week.

(Pablo Monsivais/The New York Times)

Davos to focus on global economy, conflicts

JOHN HEILPRIN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Conflicts like the war in Syria and getting the world economy back on track will be the focus of next week's annual gathering of world leaders and power brokers in the Swiss ski resort of Davos. Organizers of the World Economic Forum said Wednesday that hundreds of public figures are due to attend the event, including the leaders of 40 countries, the CEOs of major companies like Google and celebrities like Matt Damon. This year's event will coincide with the start of the first face-to-face negotiations between the Syrian government and opposition, which will also take place in Switzerland, in the cities of Montreux and Geneva.

George Sabra, president of the Western-backed opposition group known as

the Syrian National Coalition, has confirmed his attendance at Davos — but not at the peace talks. The coalition is one of the only opposition groups willing to deal with Syrian President Bashar Assad's government. But it is in exile and has lost widespread credibility within its ranks and among rival opposition factions in Syria.

The forum's organizers said they do not yet know how many of the officials who will be at the Syrian peace talks might then join the Davos forum, which will draw Turkey's foreign minister, two Saudi Arabian princes and other high-level officials from countries with a stake in the Syrian crisis.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry will be in Switzerland from Jan. 21-25, first in Montreux and then in Davos for several days where he will deliver remarks about U.S. "commit-



Swiss soldiers install a fence as a security measure for the upcoming World Economic Forum WEF in Davos Switzerland. The annual WEF meeting lasts from Jan. 22 to Jan. 25, 2014.

(AP Photo/Keystone, Arno Balzarini)

ment to and engagement in the Middle East region," spokesperson Jen Psaki said Wednesday.

The Geneva peace talks are being convened by U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who will also be in Davos, as will the heads of U.N. and other humani-

tarian agencies working to ease the effects of a war that has killed an estimated 130,000 people and forced over 2 million to flee the country.

The two events are coordinating among themselves. The Swiss Army will be called out to provide

security and will arrange to fly officials between them if needed.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his foreign minister, Javad Zarif, will try to cash in on a recent deal agreed on with world powers to curb Tehran's nuclear program.

U.S. charges Wal-Mart with labor violations

SAM HANANEL
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials filed a formal complaint Wednesday charging that Wal-Mart violated the rights of workers who took part in protests and strikes against the company.

The National Labor Relations Board says Wal-Mart illegally fired, disciplined or threatened more than 60 employees in 14 U.S. states for participating in legally protected activities to complain about wages and working conditions at the nation's largest retailer. The labor board's general counsel first laid out similar charges in November, but held off on filing a complaint while trying to work out a settlement with Wal-Mart. Those discussions were not successful, government officials said in a statement.

The company has insisted its actions were legal and justified.

The protests in 2012 were organized by the union-backed group OUR Walmart, which has spent years pressing Wal-Mart to increase wages and benefits and make it easier for workers to organize a union.

The group claims the majority of Wal-Mart workers are paid less than \$25,000 a year.

Wal-Mart has until Jan. 28 to respond to the complaint. The case will then go before an administrative law judge. If Wal-Mart is found liable, it could be required to award workers back pay, reinstatement and reverse any disciplinary action. But the company could still try to work out a settlement as the case goes forward.

The complaint alleges that In November 2012, Wal-Mart spokesman David Tovar went on CBS News and said there would be "consequences" for workers who engaged in strikes and protests ahead of Black Friday, the big shopping day after Thanksgiving. □

House passes \$1.1 trillion spending bill

Continued from Front

"Eh, it is what it is."

The budget process that is culminating in the passage of the spending bill has ushered in a remarkable marginalization of the Republican far right.

After a politically disastrous 16-day government shutdown last fall, the House voted 285-144 to reopen the government Oct. 16. Only 87 Republicans voted yes; 144 voted no.

The legislation that reopened the government set the parameters for a broad budget deal that was again denounced by conservatives. But in December, that deal passed the House 332-94, with 169 Republicans backing it.

That budget blueprint yielded more than 1,500 pages of fine print.

For the most ardent conservatives, the spending bill passed by the House on Wednesday represented a tangible backslide from fiscal discipline, a \$45 billion increase in spending compared with where the budget would have been had House Republicans let another round of automatic spending cuts take effect. Yet it passed the House with an even greater mar-

gin - and even more Republican votes.

"Our people learned a lot of tough lessons in the last year, and I think you're seeing the tough lessons applied," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla. In the process, Speaker John A. Boehner has reasserted control over

his fractious Republican conference, leaving his far-right flank angry and isolated. The speaker's public and private denunciations of the outside conservative groups have created conditions in which members must choose sides, and they have.

"The Tea Party groups and conservative movement in America gave the speaker his speakership, and I think it's time for us to be grateful for what these outside groups have done," said Rep. Raul Labrador, R-Idaho, who has remained in the Tea Party camp. □



House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio leaves the House chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014, after the final vote on a massive \$1.1 trillion spending bill. The measure sailed through the House with no suspense and little dissent — fueled additionally by lawmakers' desire to avoid an election-year replay of last fall's widely unpopular 16-day federal shutdown.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Obama announces institute to create manufacturing jobs

MARK LANDLER
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RALEIGH, N.C. - It was President Barack Obama's first policy-related trip of 2014, but he used it to take care of some unfinished business from 2013.

With less than two weeks till his State of the Union address on Jan. 28, Obama hastened to make good on a pledge from last year's speech, announcing the creation of a high-tech manufacturing institute aimed at creating well-paying jobs.

Speaking to 2,000 students at North Carolina State University, which is leading a group of universities and companies that established the institute, Obama said it was the kind of inno-

vation that would reinvigorate the nation's manufacturing economy.

"We're not going to turn things around overnight," Obama declared, referring to a decade of lost jobs in homegrown North Carolina industries like textiles and furniture making. But, he said, "We are going to start bringing those jobs back to America."

White House officials defended the time it took to announce the first manufacturing institute, saying these ventures require extensive planning and are chosen through competitions.

"If we had announced everything in a week," the press secretary, Jay Carney, told reporters, "you

would have said it wasn't serious, it wasn't real, and the assessments made about where to launch these initiatives weren't rigorous and substantive."

This is the first of three such institutes the White House plans to announce in the coming weeks.

It will be financed by a five-year, \$70 million grant from the Department of Energy, which will be matched by funding from the consortium members, including equipment maker John Deere and Delphi, an auto-parts maker.

The institute will use advanced semiconductor technology to develop a new generation of energy-efficient devices for automobiles, consumer

electronics and industrial motors. Earlier Wednesday, Obama toured a Finnish company, Vacon, that makes drives used to control the speed of electric motors, to increase their energy efficiency.

Confessing that there was "a lot of physics" in the company's presentation, the president seemed most interested in which of the components were made in the United States.

The announcement Wednesday of the new manufacturing institute showcased the White House's determination to press ahead with jobs programs, with or without Congress. Obama said he was determined to make 2014 "a year of action." □

From Governors to Congress, a Blunt Message: Do Something

RICK LYMAN

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WASHINGTON - The nation's governors criticized Congress on Wednesday

for the political gridlock that they said had stymied passage of almost every federal initiative most needed by the states, and

reiterated their calls for help from Washington. "We are now midway through the 113th Congress, and governors are

frustrated," said Gov. Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, a Republican and chairwoman of the National Governors Association, as she delivered the group's second State of the States address. "Despite the recent budget agreement, partisan gridlock continues to prevent long-term policy solutions," Fallin said. "We're doing our part as governors to create jobs and address the challenges facing our states and this country. But we also believe that now it's time for our federal partners to do theirs and to take action."

Last January, the governors association came to Washington to lay out a blueprint of what states needed from lawmakers. This year's list of requests, Fallin said, is almost identical.

"We stand here today with essentially the same to-do list sitting before our Congress," she said.

Fallin and the vice chairman of the association, Gov. John W. Hickenlooper of Colorado, a Democrat, delivered the address at the National Press Club a day after meeting with President Barack Obama.

The president and his staff asked a lot of questions, Hickenlooper said, and promised to act on behalf of any governors who felt the federal government was stifling their states' efforts.

In particular, the governors called on Congress and the White House to fix what they said were flaws in the No Child Left Behind Act, to reauthorize the Water Resources Development Act, to restore the 15 percent of cash set aside for states under the Workforce Investment Act, to ensure that each state's National Guard has enough money to operate effectively, and to give states more flexibility to experiment with new solutions to nagging problems.

The rollout of the Affordable Care Act, which has dominated political discussion in Washington in recent months, received barely a mention, an indication of the disagreement among governors on the contentious subject.

"It's a difficult time," Fallin said. "Change is hard."

The governors were also keen to point to state efforts to train workers, improve access to education, lower health care costs and address the nation's crumbling infrastructure, contrasting that to the lack of action in Congress.

"States are leading, and we encourage our federal partners to work more closely with us and to take note of and use the policy ideas coming from their state partners," Fallin said. "Above all, please do not get in our way."

As the shrinking federal budget, including the automatic cuts known as sequestration, has choked off some of the money that ordinarily flows to statehouses, governors have had to reduce services and scramble to keep programs operating. □



Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, vice chairman of the National Governors Association, answers questions as Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin, National Governors Association chairwoman, looks on at the National Press Club in Washington, Jan. 15, 2014.

(Doug Mills/The New York Times)

Justices seem split on buffer zones at abortion clinics

Adam Liptak

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WASHINGTON - The Supreme Court appeared evenly divided Wednesday as it heard arguments in a First Amendment challenge to a Massachusetts law that created buffer zones around abortion clinics in the state.

But a significant piece of data was missing: Chief Justice John Roberts, who almost certainly holds the crucial vote, asked no questions.

The court seemed otherwise split along ideological lines, with questions from its four more liberal members suggesting that the 35-foot buffer zone created by the 2007 law was a valid response to decades of harassment and violence at abortion clinics in Massachusetts, including a shooting rampage at two facilities in 1994.

The court's more conservative members questioned the need for the law and said it was a blunt and selective instrument.

"This is not a protest case," Justice Antonin Scalia said.

"It's a counseling case." The lead plaintiff in the case, Eleanor McCullen, has said she seeks to en-

the buffer zone frustrated her efforts and violated her First Amendment rights. Justice Stephen G. Breyer

ing somebody or screaming at somebody," he said. The justices debated whether and when buf-



Pro-abortion protesters, left, demonstrate next to anti-abortion supporters in prayer outside the Supreme Court in Washington, Jan. 15, 2014. On Wednesday, in *McCullen v. Coakley*, legislation that created a protester buffer zone around abortion clinic entrances, the Supreme Court considers whether the law violates the protesters' free speech rights under the First Amendment.

(Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

gage in friendly conversations with women seeking abortions in an attempt to tell them they have alternatives. She added that

said that only a general prohibition on entering the zone would work.

"It's just tough to say whether they're counsel-

fer zones are permissible around funerals, slaughterhouses, fraternal lodges and the sites of labor disputes. □

Police: US shooter, 12, warned some students away



Troy Tucker, center of Roswell, N.M., holds his daughters Emily Tucker, left age 10, and Hannah Tucker, right age 12, during a community prayer vigil for the victims of the Berrendo Middle School shooting in Roswell, N.M.

(AP Photo/Albuquerque Journal, Pat Vasquez-Cunningham)

RUSSELL CONTRERAS
SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN
Associated Press

ROSWELL, New Mexico (AP) — The 12-year-old boy who opened fire in a U.S. school gym warned some students

away just before the attack, police said Wednesday.

New Mexico State Police Chief Pete Kassetas said the attack at Berrendo Middle School in Roswell

was planned in advance. But he said it appeared the boy's victims — an 11-year-old boy and 13-year-old girl — were chosen randomly. During a press briefing, Kassetas declined to speculate on a motive or say when charges would be filed. But he said the boy got the sawed-off shotgun from his family's home and had three rounds of ammunition.

Officials said Wednesday the 11-year-old boy who was shot in the face and neck remains in critical condition. The 13-year-old girl is in satisfactory condition with injuries to the right shoulder.

Kassetas said investigators worked through the night executing search warrants at the school, and determined from those searches that the attack was planned. They examined the boy's locker and the duffel bag the seventh-grader used to transport the 20-gauge pump shotgun to school.

Kassetas said the handle of the gun was sawed off so it had "more of a pistol grip." The police chief added authorities had some indication that the boy verbally warned "select students" about the attack as he arrived at the school. He didn't elaborate.

When the shots first rang out in the school's gym, some students started laughing, assuming it was just another drill.

It wasn't. But those emergency exercises that stu-

dents and teachers have undergone regularly for the past two years were being credited Wednesday with the quick disarming of the suspect.

The whole thing was over in 10 seconds, police say, thanks to John Masterson, a social studies teacher who stepped in and talked the boy into dropping his weapon. Masterson then held the boy until authorities arrived.

Police and schools across the U.S. adopted "active shooter" policies after two students in Colorado killed 12 classmates and a teacher at Columbine High School in 1999. Police waited 45 minutes for a SWAT team to arrive before entering the school. Officers now are trained to confront a shooter immediately.

The suspected shooter was transferred to an Albuquerque psychiatric hospital following a hearing Tuesday, according to attorney Robert Gorence, who is representing his family. Gorence said the family would release a statement Wednesday. □

US has video of captured US soldier

LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. officials have received a new video of captured U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl that they believe was taken within the last month, showing that the soldier is alive.

The video came to light several days ago, said one senior defense official. Another official said that Bergdahl appeared in poorer health than previous videos, showing the signs of his nearly five years in captivity.

Bergdahl was taken prisoner in Afghanistan on June 30, 2009. It is believed he is being held somewhere in Pakistan.

The Taliban have said they would free him in ex-

change for several of their most senior operatives who are being detained at the U.S. detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In a statement, Bergdahl's family said that they learned Wednesday about the video.

"Naturally, this is very important to us and our resolve to continue our efforts to bring Bowe home as soon as possible," the statement said. "As we have done so many times over the past four and a half years, we request his captors to release him safely so that our only son can be reunited with his mother and father. Bowe - If (you) see this, continue to remain strong through patience. Your endurance will carry you to the finish line. Breathe!" □

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Arizona: Program to end homelessness among veterans hits milestone

FERNANDA SANTOS
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PHOENIX - Their descent into homelessness began almost as soon as they had closed a dignified chapter in their lives: their military service.

Dexter Mackenstadt, 63, a sailor who spent the Vietnam War tracking submarines along the East Coast, slipped into alcoholism. Robert Stone, 56, who

there were 222 chronically homeless veterans here, a vulnerable, hard-to-reach population of mostly middle-age men, virtually all battling some type of physical or mental ailment along with substance abuse. Federal and city officials acknowledged that was not an exact number, but it is widely regarded as the best measure of the veteran population.

ically homeless veterans in housing, its mayor, Ralph Becker, announced.

These milestones are the first significant achievements by individual communities in the federal government's plan to end homelessness among veterans by 2015, part of its ambitious and complex push to eliminate homelessness overall by 2020. Although officials have con-

deputy director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, which coordinates the federal response to homelessness, said in an interview. "And if we do this for veterans, it's something that as a nation, if we set our mind to, we can achieve for other populations as well."

Arizona has a higher number of homeless veterans than most other states - roughly 1 in 5 homeless adults, according to statistics from the state's Department of Veterans' Services. In an interview, Greg Stanton, the mayor of Phoenix and a longtime proponent of increasing investment and partnerships on homeless outreach, characterized the recent achievement as "important because we're helping people in need, but also important because it helps our economy."

According to local and national surveys, it is more expensive to cover the costs of emergency room visits or nights in jail for homeless people than it is to give them a home. A 2009 analysis commissioned by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, which handles the largest population of homeless veterans in the country, found that the monthly cost of housing and supportive services for one person was \$605, while the public costs of a person living on the streets were roughly \$2,900 a month.

Across the country, the strategy is centered on an approach called Housing First, through which a home is not treated as a reward for good behavior. As Zeilinger put it, it is instead "the platform of stability that lets previously homeless people work on the other issues they're facing," like mental illness and

addiction, which are particularly common among the chronically homeless, a term defined as those who have continuously lived on the streets for a year or have done so at least four times over three years.

Some advocates say the concept works more easily in places like Phoenix, where there is room to build. Victory Place, the 104-apartment complex where Mackenstadt and Hankins live, opened last year on the city's south side. (An additional 96 units are under construction on the same campus.)

Meanwhile, in cities like Los Angeles, building is expensive and competition is stiff for existing affordable-housing units, which are already scarce, said Steve Peck, president and chief executive of U.S. Vets, the nation's largest nonprofit service provider for veterans. There is also the challenge of sustaining the investment, given the steady stream of soldiers back from Iraq and Afghanistan who have been ending up on the streets.

"The question," said Peck, who served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam, "is how we create enough housing units to house those who are homeless and where we find the money to provide all the services that are essential to keep them in those units."

Through a joint program that is the backbone of the federal effort, the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs have given \$913 million since 2010 in vouchers, as well as clinical and social services, to chronically homeless veterans in or near the communities where they live. (The veterans contribute 30 percent of their gross income toward housing.)



John Hankins, right, who repaired ballistic missiles for the Air Force, plays chess with William Godwin as Gary Workman, left, watches, in Phoenix, Jan. 8, 2014. All three veterans were considered chronically homeless but now live in Victory Place, apartments subsidized by the city government in Phoenix, which believes there are no more former servicemen living on its streets. (Samantha Sais/The New York Times)

spent three years stationed at naval bases in California, fell to that, too, and to a failing heart. John Hankins, 52, who repaired intercontinental ballistic missiles at an Air Force base in Wyoming, spent years as a drifter, living in a methamphetamine lab in the Arizona desert.

Today they are neighbors and participants in a program that White House officials have said has led Phoenix to become the first community in the country to end homelessness among veterans with long or recurrent histories of living on the streets.

In 2011, by a city count,

Last month, the last 41 members of that group were placed into temporary housing. Shane Groen, a director at the Arizona Coalition to End Homelessness, one of the city's partners in the program, said the goal was to have them all in permanent housing by Feb. 14.

Stone, 56, said, "I'm coming up on nine months sober, and a big part of it is because I have a roof over my head."

He lived on the streets off and on for 15 years until he moved into an apartment here in March.

This month, Salt Lake City placed the last of its chron-

ceded that the plan is behind schedule, they point to the significant decline in the number of homeless veterans - to roughly 58,000, or 12 percent of the homeless population, last January from 76,000, or 24 percent of the nation's homeless, in 2010 - as a hopeful sign, given that it happened in spite of the difficult economic times. (The number of homeless people overall fell by 5 percent during the same period.)

"We do think we can get to the point where we can say there are no more homeless veterans in the country," Laura Zeilinger,

US Financial Front:

Fed says American economic growth healthy over holidays

C. S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Federal Reserve survey shows economic growth remained healthy in most U.S. regions in late November and December, helped by gains in consumer spending and factory output.

Nine of the Fed's 12 banking districts described growth as moderate, according to the Beige Book survey released Wednesday. That's up from seven districts in October through early November. And two of those districts said growth had accelerated since the previous report. Only two districts -- Boston and Philadelphia -- said growth was modest, while Kansas City said it "held steady."

Three-quarters of the districts said shoppers spent more over the winter holidays. And all but Kansas City said manufacturing production grew.

The Beige Book survey is based on anecdotal reports from businesses and will be considered along with other data when the Fed meets next Jan. 28-29. The report showed little signs of the slowdown in hiring that the government reported last week. The Labor Department said Friday that employers added only 74,000 jobs last month, down from an average of 214,000 in the preceding four months.

The Fed survey, however, said two-thirds of the districts reported increases in hiring. That may bolster the view among many economists that December's hiring slowdown was temporary and partly the result of bad weather.

Still, weaker December job gains could lead the Fed to rethink its recent decision to pull back on some of its stimulus.

Fed policymakers decided last month to cut the monthly purchases to \$75 billion from \$85 billion and suggested it would further trim its buying in future

meetings. The bond purchases are intended to spur more borrowing and spending.

But Dana Saporta, an economist at Credit Suisse, said the report was positive enough to suggest that the Fed will continue reducing its purchases.

"We find nothing that threatens to divert the Fed from its current tapering path," she said.

There have been other signs that the economy is growing at a solid pace. Americans increased their spending at retailers in November and December at a faster pace than the previous year, according to the National Retail Federation.

Greater consumer spending is a key reason that most economists expect growth will top 3 percent at an annual rate in the October-December quarter. That would mark a second straight quarter of healthy growth after a 4.1 percent expansion from July through September.

Several districts reported significant improvement in manufacturing, suggesting businesses and consumers are spending more. A manufacturer in the Dallas district said that his company "had too many jobs to bid on ... for the first time since before the recession," according to the Beige Book. Most districts also said home sales, construction and prices continued to rise. Several districts said the housing recovery was boosting output "all the way from raw materials like lumber to finished products like kitchen cabinets."

However, reports on tourism were more mixed. Atlanta reported healthy increases in hotel room reservations. But hotels in Manhattan said revenues per room in November fell more than 10 percent from a year earlier, the first 12-month decline since the fall of 2012. Travel and tourism were also weaker in Hawaii and Las Vegas. □



Mannequins display fashions in an H&M storefront window advertising discounts up to 75%, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014 in New York. A Federal Reserve survey shows economic growth remained healthy in most U.S. regions in late November and December, helped by gains in consumer spending and factory output.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

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US-Afghan tensions increase as airstrike kills more civilians

AZAM AHMED

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KABUL, Afghanistan - A coalition airstrike in a province north of Kabul killed at least two Afghan villagers Wednesday morning, prompting President Hamid Karzai to order an official inquiry and escalating tensions yet again between the allies over civilian deaths.

While details of the fighting in the Seya Gerd district of Parwan province remained sketchy, officials confirmed that a strike had been called in after Afghan and coalition soldiers took heavy fire during a mission to clear the area. The gunfight, which took place in an insurgent stronghold used to carry out attacks on Bagram Air Base, claimed the life of one coalition soldier, at least 10 Taliban fighters and several civilians, though the exact number was not yet clear, coalition and Afghan officials said. Civilian casualties have always been a contentious issue in Afghanistan,

but perhaps never more so than now. With the fate of a long-term security deal between the United States and Afghanistan hanging in the balance, Karzai has made a cessation of the airstrikes, which take the

biggest toll on civilians, a precondition of any agreement. In late November, after a drone strike claimed the lives of civilians in southern Helmand province, the president all but threatened to cancel the deal.

The civilian deaths on Wednesday are likely to worsen the relationship between the Afghans and Americans, a partnership that seems to grow more strained with every passing week. Karzai's recent

order to release dozens of prisoners believed to have killed U.S. forces, despite weeks of threats of a troop withdrawal by the United States, caused the latest dispute between the allies. So heavy is the tension over the issue of civilian casualties that, after the episode in Parwan, the presidential palace, the coalition and even the Taliban released statements giving it their own spin.

The palace said it had appointed a fact-finding delegation that would report back with details in three days. The coalition, in addition to offering an apology for any civilian casualties, sought to offer context to the "Afghan-led" operation in its statement.

"This deliberately planned clearing operation was conducted to disrupt insurgent activities in the district, including attacks on Bagram Air Field, and in support of Afghan National Security Forces' tactical priorities," the statement said. "Local district and provincial officials were informed in advance of the operation and were provided updates during and after the actions."

The Taliban, for their part, seized the opportunity to score a propaganda point. While the Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, sent a note to reporters saying that his email address had been hacked "by the enemy," the insurgent group managed to put out a brief statement about the deaths.

"Last night foreign and local forces targeted and bombed civilian homes," the statement said. "Four children and two women were martyred, and a number of them were wounded. The misery is still going on." □



Afghan police officers inspect a site where police said a man as a suicide bomber tried to attack the home of a tribal elder in Kabul, Afghanistan, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014. Afghan police said security guards killed a suicide bomber in Kabul as he tried to attack the home of a tribal elder opposed to the Taliban.

(AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

Amnesty: Gays arrested in 4 Nigerian states

MICHELLE FAUL
Associated Press

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — A "witch hunt" for gay people has led to arrests in at least four of Nigeria's 36 states, Amnesty International said Wednesday, blaming a new law criminalizing gay organizations and meetings as well as same-sex marriage. It said the law's disregard for human rights mirrors that of the military dictators who ruled Africa's most populous nation until 1999. Nigerian human rights defenders say they fear further persecution of gay people under the law in a notoriously corrupt country where police are known to

make arrests to extort money and blackmail victims.

"With the stroke of a pen, President (Goodluck) Jonathan has essentially turned Nigeria into one of the world's least tolerant societies," London-based Amnesty International said in a statement calling for the law to be withdrawn without delay.

The Associated Press reported Tuesday that 38 people had been arrested in the northern state of Bauchi since Christmas, and some have been charged in court with belonging to a gay organization.

Amnesty said 10 people have been detained since

Monday in four southern states.

It said police in Bauchi have confirmed they have a list of suspects of minority sexual orientation who are under surveillance that also is being used to "find out who their victims are."

"Amnesty International is calling on the authorities to stop all further arrests and put an immediate end to this witch hunt," the statement said.

Jonathan signed the law despite international condemnation. Nigeria already had a law making sodomy illegal, and no gay people have been demanding marriage in a country

where gay people can get lynched and beaten to death, or legally executed by stoning for the offense under the Islamic Shariah law that prevails in nine of the 36 states.

That has led some critics to suggest the issue is being used for political reasons in a country deeply divided on religious, tribal and regional grounds that often lead to deadly clashes. Nigeria's more than 160 million people are almost equally divided between the predominantly Muslim north and mainly Christian south, but all are united in the condemnation of homosexuality. □

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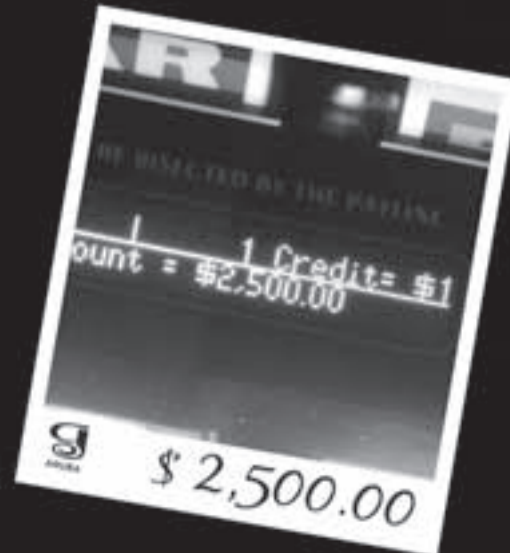
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Iraqi army retakes western town seized by gunmen

**QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA
 SAMEER N. YACOUB
 Associated Press**

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi airstrikes pounded a town near Fallujah that had been seized by al-Qaida linked militants and commandos swept in Wednesday to clear the area, senior military officials said.

It was a rare victory for government forces that have been struggling for nearly three weeks to regain control of the mainly Sunni area west of Baghdad.

North of the capital, a bomb tore through a funeral of an anti-al-Qaida Sunni militiaman, the deadliest in a series of attacks that killed at least 50 people nationwide.

Violence has risen sharply as extremist Islamic militants try to exploit growing anger among the Sunni minority over what they perceive as mistreatment and random arrests by the Shiite-led government.

Members of the al-Qaida linked group known as the State of Iraq and the Levant — emboldened by successes in the civil war raging next door in Syria — made a push to seize parts of the mainly Sunni Anbar province as violence erupted after the government arrested a Sunni lawmaker sought on terrorism charges on Dec. 28, then dismantled an anti-government Sunni protest camp in the provincial Ramadi.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has held off ordering an all-out offensive against the extremists because of fears that civilian casualties could incite Sunni anger and push moderate

tribal leaders to side with the extremists. The area was one of the bloodiest battlefields for U.S. forces during the war and al-Qaida's resurgence poses a major challenge to the government and its forces two years after the Americans withdrew.

Wednesday's counterattack came a day after al-Qaida militants blew up an explosives-laden fuel tanker at an army checkpoint, killing three soldiers, on a small bridge near Saqlawiyah, just north of Fallujah.

Heavily armed gunmen then stormed into the town and surrounded the main police station, forcing all the policemen to relinquish their weapons and leave. Security forces then launched airstrikes against the gunmen, who fled, allowing Iraqi troops to enter the town later Wednesday. The senior military officials described the events on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to release the information.

It was a welcome suc-

cess for Iraq's government, which has been heavily criticized for failing to protect the people. But the militants retain control of large swaths in Ramadi and Fallujah.

The unrest in Anbar and other mainly Sunni-dominated provinces has uprooted thousands of people from their homes as they flee the fighting amid fears the government may still launch an

all-out offensive.

International aid agencies appealed to the warring parties on Wednesday to allow humanitarian aid to reach the displaced families. □



Salah Abdul Hassan, a mechanic who says he was pushed against a wall from the strength of an explosion he witnessed earlier, stands at the site of the car bomb explosion in the Karrada neighborhood of Baghdad, Jan. 15, 2014. At least seven car bombs detonated across Baghdad Wednesday, in lethal and apparently coordinated attacks by militants that killed at least 30 people, according to police and health officials.

(Ayman Oghanna/The New York Times)

Pope names commission to oversee Vatican Bank

**JIM YARDLEY
 GAIA PIANIGIANI
 © 2014 New York Times**

ROME - Pope Francis continued shaking up the Vatican on Wednesday as he named a new oversight commission of cardinals for the troubled Vatican Bank, replacing all but one of the appointees made by his predecessor, Benedict XVI, in another example of how the new pope is consolidating power.

Since becoming pope less

than a year ago, Francis has shifted personnel in important Vatican departments, placing his picks in key positions while signaling that he intends to crack down on the intrigues and disarray that plagued the Vatican bureaucracy under the shy, aloof Benedict. The Vatican Bank, known as the Institute for Works of Religion, has been under scrutiny for years, amid suspicions that some accounts might be fronts for illegal

interests. European regulators are pushing the secretive bank to become more transparent and adhere to international banking standards, a process that began under Benedict.

Shortly after he announced his surprise resignation last February, Benedict approved new five-year terms for the existing five-man committee overseeing the bank, including Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, then the secretary of state, the

Vatican's second-ranking official. On Wednesday, Francis retained only one of those five - Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran - while replacing Bertone with Pietro Parolin, the man who also replaced him as secretary of state. "It is not surprising," said one Vatican official familiar with the bank, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "It has been in the works. It is a normal turnover. It is good for the working of the institution." □

Danish tourist says she was gang-raped in New Delhi

**HARI KUMAR
ELLEN BARRY**

© 2014 New York Times

NEW DELHI - A 51-year-old Danish woman said she had been gang-raped at knifepoint by seven or eight men in central New Delhi after she approached them to ask for directions to her hotel, Delhi police reported Wednesday. Late Wednesday night, the police announced the arrest of two men they described as "vagabonds" living at the capital's railway station, and said they had property stolen from the tourist, including a glasses case, an iPod and earplugs.

The woman, who was staying at a hotel in an area popular with backpackers, told police that the men had taken her to a secluded spot near the railway station Tuesday and raped her repeatedly, said Rajan Bhagat, a spokesman for the Delhi police.

The woman arrived in Delhi

on Monday from Agra, the site of the Taj Mahal, and was planning to leave India on Wednesday morning, said a manager at the hotel where she was staying.

The manager, who refused to give his name for fear of harming the hotel's reputation, said she had returned to the hotel around 8:30 p.m. and asked the reception desk to call the police. After consultations with the police and staff members from the Danish Embassy that lasted until the early morning hours, she caught her morning flight out of India, the employee said.

NDTV, an Indian news channel, reported that the woman had been held by the men from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., after which she made her way back to her hotel. Bhagat said the woman had refused to be medically examined and the police were trying to gather other evidence.

Freddy Svane, Denmark's



An Indian policeman stands outside the police station which is investigating the gang-rape of a Danish tourist in New Delhi, India, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014. A 51-year-old Danish tourist was gang-raped near a popular shopping area in New Delhi after she stopped to ask for directions, police said Wednesday, the latest case to focus attention on the scourge of violence against women in India. The woman managed to reach her hotel in Paharganj area Tuesday evening and the owner called police.

(AP Photo/Tsering Topgyal)

ambassador to India, confirmed that an allegation of rape had been made by a Danish citizen Tuesday. The report of the attack comes after a year of in-

tense national debate on the problem of sexual violence, set off by an attack on a 23-year-old physiotherapy student in New Delhi in December 2012.

The victim, who had boarded a private bus along with a male friend, was gang-raped and brutalized with a metal rod and later died from her injuries. □



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Portugal aims to raise \$17.7B in bonds this year

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal's government debt agency said Wednesday it plans to raise up to 13 billion euros (\$17.7 billion) from bond sales this year as the country recovers from a financial crisis that forced it to ask for a bailout. Portugal needed a 78 billion-euro international rescue in 2011 when investors, spooked by the government's high debt burden and financial turmoil in the

wider eurozone, demanded unaffordable interest rates to lend it money. That financial aid runs out in the middle of this year. The Portuguese economy emerged from recession last year, and the government last week sold five-year bonds in the first issuance of its kind since the bailout as investor appetite returned. The debt agency said it estimates Portugal's net borrowing needs at

around 11.8 billion euros in 2014. In the latest sign of renewed market confidence, Portugal paid sharply lower interest rates and recorded strong market demand as it raised 1.25 billion euros Wednesday in a sale of short-term debt. It sold 1.01 billion euros of 12-month Treasury bills at a rate of 0.869 percent, down from 1.49 percent at a similar auction last November, with demand for more

than twice the amount. The rest was in 3-month bills at a rate of 0.495 percent, compared with 1.07 percent two months ago, and demand was close to five times the amount on offer. "I really didn't expect such low rates," said Filipe Silva, debt manager of Lisbon-based financial group Banco Carregosa. "The truth is that the risk that investors associate with Portuguese debt is going down a lot."

EU clinching deal on regulations for financial markets

JUERGEN BAETZ
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union negotiators have struck a deal on the outlines of a new regulation covering a wide array of financial instruments and markets, including provisions to curb food speculation and tighter controls on the power of computers to make trading decisions.

The regulation agreed to late Tuesday after more than three years of negotiations includes limits to cap trading of some commodity derivatives that has been blamed for driving up food prices.

The EU Commission, the bloc's executive arm, said the rules on agricultural derivatives will "contribute to orderly pricing and prevent market abuse, thus curbing speculation on commodities and the disastrous impacts it can have on the world's poorest populations."

The rules also seek to ban unregulated trading and establish tighter rules for high-frequency trading, which some blame for increasing volatility to a point that threatens the stability of financial markets. High-frequency trading, which involves computers making split-second decisions based on mathematical models, has become an increasingly important driver in financial markets in the past few years.

"The new rules will for the first time slow down the pace of trading, increase transparency and ensure prices reflect current market conditions and ensure proper supervision," said center-left European Parliament lawmaker Arlene McCarthy.

Representatives of the EU's 28 governments and EU lawmakers struck the deal on the outlines of the so-called Markets in Financial Instruments Directive, or MiFID, in a late-night session in Strasbourg.

The legislation is part of the overhaul of financial regulation after the financial crisis. □

EU ups pressure on Google in antitrust case

JUERGEN BAETZ
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's antitrust watchdog is increasing pressure on Google to swiftly provide better proposals to address allegations the firm is abusing its dominant position in Internet searches.

If the U.S. tech giant fails to present better proposals to reach a settlement, the EU will start the traditional antitrust procedure, the EU's competition watchdog chief Joaquin Almunia said Wednesday.

That more confrontational route could take years, but also result in fines worth billions of dollars.

Almunia said that feedback from competitors and other market players on Google's latest proposed changes to its Internet searches was clearly negative.

"So let's see if Google can improve their proposal or we go to the traditional route," he told reporters in Brussels.

"We need more, not during the next year but during the next weeks," Almunia said. Google's pending reaction will be the "last opportunity" for reaching a settlement, he added.

Google's Brussels office did not react to repeated emails and calls seeking comment.

The company has a market share of about 90 per-

cent of results pages, especially when consumers are likely to be searching for something to buy.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the

search results stemming from its own services to allow users to distinguish between natural search results and those promoted by Google.



European Commissioner for Competition Joaquin Almunia addresses the media at the European Commission headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014. The European Union's antitrust watchdog is increasing its pressure on Google to provide improved proposals to address allegations it's abusing its dominant position in Internet searches. EU antitrust chief Joaquin Almunia on Wednesday said if Google fails to present better proposals to achieve a settlement, the EU will start the traditional and more confrontational procedure, which can take years but could result in fines worth billions of dollars.

cent of Internet searches in Europe, compared with around 70 percent in the U.S.

Competitors in Europe have complained about the way Google gives preference to its own Google-branded services at the

28-nation European Union, has been investigating Google since 2010. Almunia has said he hopes to resolve the case by spring this year.

Google, based in Mountain View, Calif., has offered to more clearly label

(AP Photo/Yves Logghe)

In its second round of proposals in October, Google's main concession was to offer competitors the chance to advertise their own services and brand in the second row of search results, below the Google-branded result. □

Tuscan construction firms linked to mobsters

ROME (AP) — Police have arrested six people accused of taking part in a tax-cheating scheme by two Tuscan construction companies that was allegedly devised by a mobster. Tax police Lt. Col. Antonino Raimondo said Wednesday

the Uffizi Gallery in Florence was among the places where the companies had done construction work.

Raimondo said in a telephone interview that a convicted Camorra boss masterminded the scheme,

in which fake receipts for nonexistent construction expenses were used to save the unidentified companies 3.1 million euros in taxes.

He said the illicit savings gave the companies an unfair advantage in bid-

ding for legitimate contracts, including a subcontract for work at the Uffizi, which wasn't aware of the mob links.

Raimondo said mobsters took 4 percent of the income for the "expertly done" construction. □



Aruban Donkey Foundation Organizes Its Annual Walkathon



secutive year. Registration starts at 4 pm at the Ayo Rock Formation; the walk starts at 5 pm.

Participants and accompanying donkeys will take a 6.5 km walk through Aruba's countryside: a healthy and energizing activity. Afterwards your registration ticket might make you a winner of wonderful prizes.

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The volunteers of the Donkey Sanctuary hope that many people will help make this Walkathon a success. Proceeds will go entirely towards the building of new stables for the donkeys at Bringamosa, the new site of the sanctuary. So please, get up from your easy chair and come along to support the Aruban donkeys with a healthy activity.

Everyone, young and old, is welcome! □

BRINGAMOSA - The annual Walkathon, a brisk walk through Aruba's wonderful countryside, has become a tradition in the month of January. On Saturday, January 18, the event will take place for the ninth con-



Chamber of Commerce offers Business Plaza-Step Forward!



ORANJESTAD - There are still some seats left to attend the morning presentations and the workshop sessions during Business Plaza-Step Forward! Consider expanding your business, restructuring or

exporting your products or services? Join Business Plaza-Step Forward!, and learn how to take your business to the next level. As already known, during Business Plaza-Step Forward! the focus lies on the

entrepreneur who wants his company to grow, either by changing the legal entity, restructuring, or adding additional objectives or products and services to the existing company. Business Plaza-Step Forward!

will take place on Saturday, January 18, 2014 from 09:00 am till 3:30 pm. at the Aruba Chamber of Commerce. Admission is free. The morning program consists of several presentations on business expansion related topics. After a short refreshment break, which includes networking opportunities, the afternoon program covers two different workshops that will take place in 4 hourly sessions. One-on-one information sessions will be possible with business advisors of the Chamber and other organizations relevant to your business growth. In order to assist

at the presentations and workshops, pre-registration is required. You may register by sending your name and phone number to: businessinfo@arubachamber.com no later than Thursday, January 16th. Please, specify your attendance at the presentations and/or the workshops and state your preferred timeslot. See program attached. For more information on the program details, questions, please, contact the Chamber at: 582-1566, ext. 27/35/42/30. We look forward welcoming you on Saturday, January 18th. □

On Thursday Evening: Artist demonstration at the Caribbean Queen Store



PALM BEACH - Gigiola Gomez, Caribbean Queen for January 2014, will be demonstrating her craft at the Caribbean Queen store at the Palm Beach Plaza Mall on Thursday, in the evening hours. Gigiola Gomez, who makes accessories out of different kinds of fabric and materials is a well-known local designer. Some of her credits include being named exclusive bathing suit designer for the Miss Teen Aruba International 2013. In 2012, she had the honor of dressing Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and her daughter-in-law Princess Maxima, now Queen Maxima. She also presented a collec-

tion during Aruba In Style 2012, which gave her the opportunity to showcase her work to a broader audience including the international fashion press. Gigi's current collection was inspired by the Island's beautiful beaches, resulting in the Coral Print Beach Collection. Part of the collection was gifted to Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands when she visited the Island in 2013. Come see her collection of accessories at the Caribbean Queen store, Palm Beach Village Mall in January. "I hope you enjoy my designs as much as I enjoyed creating them," says Gigi. □

Beauty
On The Beach

Hanna Gonzales

She is from Caracas, Venezuela. Her first time in Aruba

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joy with the whole family. A place where children and grownups can enjoy a little speed & fun on vacation! it will definitely make your vacation an unforgettable one! Racing helmets, head socks and instruction for first time racers is provided, and our staff oversees every race to ensure individuals are driving safely and obeying the rules. We have 270cc 9 horse power Honda engine Karts that can reach up to 50mph! Age for riding the adults karts is 13 years & up. We also have 160cc 6 horse power Honda Engine Karts for kids of 7 till 12 years old. Each race is a 10 minute race against the clock. You can receive a score sheet to take home after every race to see what your best lap time was. The score sheet can give you bragging rights to your friends back home so they can see how well you raced on a professional outdoor kart-



ing track in Aruba! We have a Special this week: get \$3 off on your second race & 8 dollars off on your third race plus get a free soda at the Bar! Those who would like to race can call for reservations at 583-5278 or pass by at the track for an arrive-and-drive session open Tuesday till Sunday from 10am till sunset. We are located only minutes away from the Low Rise Hotels, in front of Ling & Sons supermarket. For more info, visit: www.bushirkarting.com.



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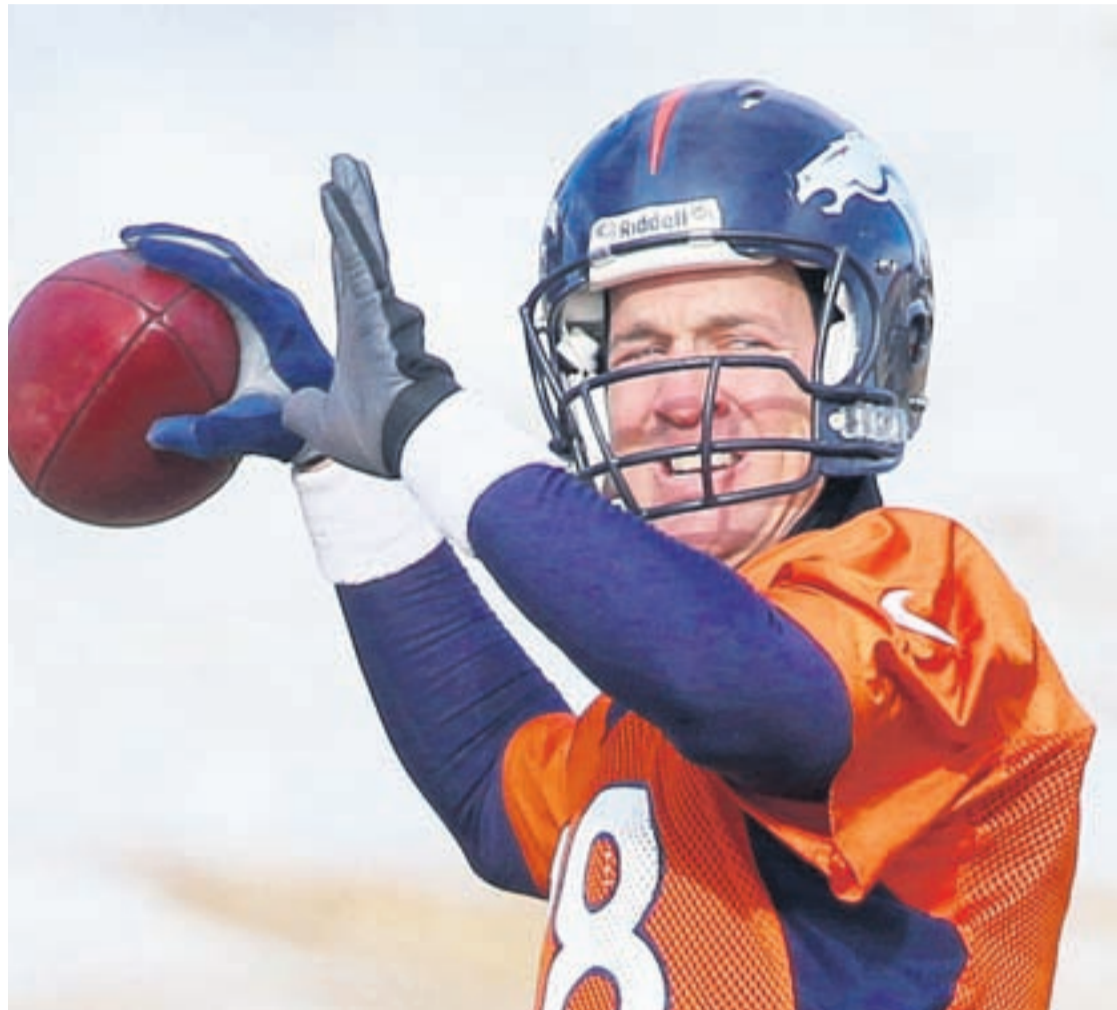
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Peyton Manning very good at second chances

ARNIE STAPLETON
AP Pro Football Writer
ENGLEWOOD, Colorado
(AP) — From rematches to revivals to redemption, it's not a good idea to bet against Peyton Manning when it comes to second chances. He has 97 touchdown throws since hooking up with Broncos executive John Elway in Denver two years ago after the Indianapolis Colts released him when neck troubles clouded his NFL future. After dispatching San Diego in the playoffs on Sunday on the anniversary of last year's crushing loss to Baltimore in eerily similar circumstances, Manning stands one win from a shot at becoming the first quarterback to win Super Bowls with two franchises. Standing in his way are Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, who beat the Broncos 34-31 in overtime in November. The thing is, it's been six years since Manning lost



Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning (18) throws during practice for the football team's NFL playoff game against the San Diego Chargers at the Broncos training facility in Englewood, Colo., Friday, Jan. 10, 2014.

Associated Press

a rematch to a team that beat him earlier in the season. The Broncos lost just once at home this season, when they became the highest-scoring team in the Super Bowl era, propelled by Manning's record 55 touchdown throws and 5,447 yards through the air. That was back on Dec. 12, when they were upset by San Diego, a loss they avenged on Sunday by beating the Chargers 24-17. The last time Manning lost twice in a row to the same team was in 2007, when the Colts lost 23-21 at San Diego in November and then dropped a 28-24 heartbreaker at home in the wild-card playoffs. Since then, Manning has won five straight rematches, and it took a vintage performance on Sunday to keep that streak going.

Continued on Page 20



New Jersey Devils right wing Jaromir Jagr (68) celebrates with teammates Mark Fayne, left, and Andy Greene, right, after scoring the first goal against the Montreal Canadiens during first period National Hockey League action, Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014, in Montreal.

Associated Press

MONTREAL (AP) — MONTREAL (AP) — Jaromir Jagr passed Mark Messier to move into seventh place in career NHL goals and Martin Brodeur made 29 saves to lead the New Jersey Devils to a 4-1 win over the Montreal Canadiens on Tuesday.

Jagr nets 695th goal in Devils' 4-1 win over Habs

The 41-year-old Jagr got his 695th goal in his 1,438th career game. On Saturday, he passed former Pittsburgh Penguins' teammate Mario Lemieux for seventh place in points with 1,724. Goals less than three minutes apart early in the second period from Eric Gelinas and Adam Henrique were the difference as the Devils extended their points streak to five games and picked up a win against a team ahead of them in the Eastern Conference. Dainius Zubrus added an empty-net goal on an assist from Jagr. Max Pacioretty scored for

Montreal in the first period. **AVALANCHE 3, BLACK-HAWKS 2, OT CHICAGO (AP)** — Tyson Barrie scored his second goal of the game on a power play at 4:09 of overtime to lift Colorado past Chicago. With Jonathan Toews off for hooking, Barrie beat Corey Crawford with a one-timer from the left circle after taking a cross-ice pass from Matt Duchene to give Colorado its second straight win. The Avalanche improved to 6-1-1 in their last eight games despite being outshot 48-26. Barrie and Ryan O'Reilly

scored 1:02 apart late in the first period. Chicago's Andrew Shaw scored on a rebound at 7:27 of the third to tie it. Shaw also assisted on Johnny Oduya's goal in the second. Semyon Varlamov made 46 saves for Colorado. **PREDATORS 4, FLAMES 2 NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP)** — Ryan Ellis ended a 42-game scoring drought by notching the first of Nashville's three third-period goals and added an assist to lead the Predators over Calgary.

Continued on Page 22

NBA Capsules

Grizzlies win, stop Thunder topping Northwest

The Associated Press
MEMPHIS, Tennessee (AP) — Courtney Lee scored a season-high 24 points, including the closing two free throws, as the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 90-87 on Tuesday in Marc Gasol's return to the lineup. Zach Randolph had 23 points and 13 rebounds on the night his inside partner came back after missing almost eight weeks with a left knee injury. Gasol played 24 minutes and finished with 12 points. Mike Conley had 19 points and seven assists for Memphis, which won its third straight. Kevin Durant led the Thunder with 37 points, converting 15 of 28 shots. Reggie Jackson scored 17, but also committed seven of Oklahoma City's 19 turnovers. Serge Ibaka finished with 11 points and four blocks as the Thunder lost their third in the last four.

PACERS 116, KINGS 92
INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Paul George scored 31 points, making four 3-pointers, as Indiana snapped Sacramento's three-

game winning streak. David West had 16 points and eight rebounds, and Lance Stephenson added 13 points, five rebounds and five assists for the Pacers (30-7), who have won five of six. The victory clinched the Eastern Conference coaching spot for Frank Vogel, since the Pacers are guaranteed to have the best winning percentage in the conference through games of Feb. 2 with Miami's Erik Spoelstra ineligible after coaching last year. DeMarcus Cousins had 31 points and 13 rebounds, and Rudy Gay scored 12 points for the Kings (13-23), who scored under 100 points for the first time in 12 games. **BOBCATS 108, KNICKS 98**
CHARLOTTE, North Carolina (AP) — Al Jefferson scored a season-high 35 points and Kemba Walker had 12 of his 25 in the fourth quarter as Charlotte snapped New York's five-game winning streak. The Bobcats were in need of a win after losing three straight games and eight of their last 10.

Walker was 4 of 4 from the field in the fourth quarter, including 3-pointers on back-to-back possessions. He also finished with seven rebounds and five assists. Gerald Henderson chipped in with 17 points for Charlotte (16-23), and Michael Kidd-Gilchrist had eight points and seven rebounds after sitting out the last 19 games with a broken left hand. Carmelo Anthony had 20 points and six rebounds as the Knicks (15-23) lost in Tyson Chandler's return to the lineup after missing four games with bronchitis. **CAVALIERS 120, LAKERS 118**
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Luol Deng hit five 3-pointers while scoring 27 points, Anderson Varejao added 18 points and 18 rebounds, and Cleveland beat spiraling Los Angeles. Dion Waiters scored 13 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers improved to 4-16 on the road. They also won for coach Mike Brown in his return to Staples Center to face the Lakers, who fired him early last season. Jodie Meeks hit six 3-pointers



New York Knicks' Tyson Chandler, top, fouls Charlotte Bobcats' Al Jefferson during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Charlotte, N.C., Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014.

Associated Press

while scoring a season-high 26 points in injury-plagued Los Angeles' fifth straight defeat. Nick Young scored 28 points, but the Lakers have lost 11 of 12 heading into a punishing seven-game road trip. □

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Williams, Djokovic into 3rd round at Aussie Open

JOHN PYE

AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Serena Williams wore a fitted pink blazer into her second-round match at the Australian Open, giving the impression she wasn't feeling the heat.

And after her 6-1, 6-2 win over Vesna Dolonc on Wednesday, the second consecutive scorching day at the season's first major, Williams said she could remember hotter matches.

By improving her career mark to 60-8 at Melbourne Park, she equaled Margaret Court's record 60 match wins at the Australian Open in the Open era. On day three at Melbourne Park, the center court at Rod Laver Arena was — at least according to the two fans holding up a sign — “Serena's Arena.”

The heat topped 40 Celsius (104F) during the 63-minute match, and peaked at just under 42 C (108 F) later during Novak Djokovic's 6-0, 6-4, 6-4 win over Leonardo Mayer. Second-seeded Djokovic, aiming to be the first man in the Open era to win four consecutive Australian Open titles, didn't



Novak Djokovic of Serbia lies on the court after falling during his second round match against Leonardo Mayer of Argentina during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014.

Associated Press

face a break point.

Williams fended off the only break point she faced with an ace, one of her 10 in the match. She hit 24 winners, sticking to the ideal strategy of keeping the points short on a hot day and extended her winning streak to 24 matches.

She said didn't even go outside Tuesday because

conditions “were a little bit extreme,” adding that the prospect of the scorching temperatures had even interrupted her sleep.

“I kept waking up in the middle of the night last night just paranoid. I just wanted to stay hydrated,” she said. “The last thing I want to do is to cramp in this weather. It can hap-

pen so easy.”

Williams next meets No. 31-seeded Daniela Hantuchova, who was on court for 3 hours, 13 minutes in her 6-3, 3-6, 12-10 win over Karolina Pliskova.

Temperatures topped 42 Celsius (108F) on Tuesday, and there were a total of nine retirements in the first round, equaling a Grand

Slam record. It wasn't quite as stifling Wednesday, but the forecast is for the heat wave to continue until Friday.

Li Na, the 2011 French Open champion and a two-time finalist at Melbourne Park, had a 6-0, 7-6 (5) win over 16-year-old Belinda Bencic and will next play No. 26 Lucie Safarova in the third round.

No. 9 Angelique Kerber advanced and will next meet American Alison Riske, who trounced Yanina Wickmayer 6-1, 6-1. Australian wild-card entry Casey Dellacqua upset No. 18 Kirsten Flipkens 6-3, 6-0.

No. 17 Sam Stosur is through to the third round of her home Grand Slam for the first time in three years after a 6-2, 6-0 win over Tsvetana Pironkova.

No. 30 Eugenie Bouchard of Canada beat Virginie Razzano 6-2, 7-6 (10) and Zheng Jie defeated American Madison Keys 7-6 (5), 1-6, 7-5.

Stosur will face former French Open champion Ana Ivanovic in the third round after the Serbian player beat Annika Beck of Germany 6-1, 6-2. □

Peyton

Continued from Page 18

After controlling the game for 3½ quarters, the Broncos allowed 17 fourth-quarter points after losing shutdown cornerback Chris Harris Jr. to a torn knee ligament.

The Broncos were facing third-and-17 from their own 20 with three minutes left and Chargers quarterback Phillip Rivers loosening up his right arm on the sideline, ready for his chance to tie this one just like the Ravens had a year earlier on their way to a 38-35 win in double overtime.

“It was deja vu,” Elway said on his weekly podcast on the team's website on Tuesday. As Manning took the snap and stepped up, the pocket began to collapse around him, but he spotted tight end Julius Thomas open along the Broncos sideline. The pass was perfect, as was Thom-



as' tap dance until his momentum took him out of bounds at the 41.

Then, on third-and-6 from his 45, Manning hit Thomas

for a 9-yard gain over the middle with 2:12 left.

A year ago, then-offensive coordinator Mike McCoy called for a run by under-

sized Ronnie Hillman on third-and-7 at about the same point in the game, which in turn ultimately led to a Baltimore touchdown with 31 seconds left.

This was the ultimate second chance, and Manning made good on it.

“Julius and I have spent a lot of time working on those particular routes, after practice, in practice,” Manning said. “And that's one of the most rewarding parts of football, when you put that work in, off to the side and after practice, and it pays off for you in a game ... those two plays were certainly worth the hard work.”

Thomas had just one career catch coming into this season, his third in the NFL, and he had been hurt on that one reception, no less. He even briefly considered giving up his dream of playing gridiron.

But this season, he broke Hall of Famer Shannon

Sharpe's team record for tight ends by catching 12 touchdown passes and it was his emergence that freed up Manning's other targets — Demaryius Thomas, Eric Decker and Wes Welker, along with running back Knowshon Moreno — who all joined him with 10 or more touchdowns.

Thomas, who didn't play in the first match against the Patriots because of a knee injury, finished with six catches for 76 yards on Sunday, but none was longer — or bigger — than his 21-yarder.

“Third-and-17 was the play of the game,” Elway said.

“We had to pick it up, keep the chains moving, keep them off the field and not give them a chance and so that's where it was tremendous. The offensive line did a great job of protecting Peyton, Julius Thomas made a great catch dragging his feet on the sideline. □

Floyd Mayweather: Manny Pacquiao's desperate now



In this file photo taken Saturday, Sept. 14, 2013 Floyd Mayweather Jr., left, gets tangled up with Canelo Alvarez during a world light-middleweight title fight, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

GERALD IMRAY
AP Sports Writer
Floyd Mayweather Jr. says

his next opponent will be Manny Pacquiao. Mayweather Jr., who arrived in South Africa on his next opponent will be decided within a week. One thing's for sure, it's not

Wednesday, named Britain's Amir Khan and Argentina's Marcos Maidana as contenders for his next bout in Las Vegas on May 3 but said "we don't know. We will know within the next seven days." The undefeated Mayweather, now 45-0 after dominating Canelo Alvarez for a unanimous decision in September, also

passed off Pacquiao's renewed attempts at making their mega fight happen as desperation because of the Filipino's unpaid tax issues. Mayweather said of Pacquiao "two losses and tax problems later, now he all of a sudden want to say: 'You know what? I'd do anything to make the fight happen.'" □

Peterhansel closes in on 12th Dakar Rally title



Stephane Peterhansel and co-pilot Jean Paul Cottret, both of France, drive their Mini past Yamaha motorcycle rider Shane Diener of Australia during the tenth stage of the Dakar Rally between the cities of Iquique and Antofagasta, Chile, Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014.

Associated Press

ANTOFAGASTA, Chile (AP) — Nasser Al-Attiyah won the 10th stage of the Dakar Rally on Wednesday, but

Stephane Peterhansel finished close behind to give himself a chance of winning his 12th Dakar title. Al-Attiyah of Qatar was 3 minutes, 50 seconds, in front of Peterhansel and 13:45 clear of overall car leader Nani Roma of Spain. Roma leads the overall by 2:15 ahead of Peterhansel. Al-Attiyah is 46 minutes off the pace with three stages remaining before Saturday's finish in Valparaiso. In bikes, Joan Barreda Bort of Spain won the stage, but countryman Marc Coma holds a commanding overall lead and should win barring a catastrophe. Coma is 44:10 ahead of Barreda Bort and more than 2 hours in front of No. 3 Jordi Viladoms. Thursday's 11th stage is from Antofagasta to El Salvador. □

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	JUSTIN BIEBER SCOOTER BRAUN JUSTIN BIEBER: BELIEVE MON - THURS 4:40 6:50 9:00 [PG] FRI 4:40 6:50 9:00 11:10 SAT 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00 11:10 SUN & HOL. 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00
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A-Rod's PED use 'most potent we've seen

JIM LITKE

AP Sports Columnist

If Anthony Bosch were still in business today, bet on this much: His phone would be buzzing nonstop with athletes trying to order the Alex Rodriguez treatment. The self-taught doping guru whose testimony and records brought down Rodriguez sounded at times like a snake-oil salesman while detailing the down-to-the-minute regimen of performance-enhancing substances he delivered to the disgraced baseball star.

Included were concoctions called "gummies" and "liquid soap," "pink cream," "blue cream" and even "PM cream" — each with varying doses of testosterone delivered in different ways throughout the day.

Silly as those sound, don't laugh. Elite athletes would gargle with antifreeze if



In this Sept. 14, 2013 file photo, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez heads to the dugout during the Yankees 5-1 loss to the Boston Red Sox in a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston.

Associated Press

they believed that would improve performance without tripping a positive test. And unlike the deer-antler spray and the other crackpot cures (holographic stickers, negatively

charged water, underwear exposed to radio waves) that NFL linebacker Ray Lewis tried to explain away at last year's Super Bowl, nearly all of what Bosch was providing A-Rod for

\$12,000 a month actually worked.

Peel away the pseudoscience and Bosch's bragging and what remained was "probably the most potent and sophisticated

drug program developed for an athlete that we've ever seen," U.S. Anti-Doping Agency CEO Travis Tygart said.

"No one who cares about clean sports likes to hear it," Tygart said in an interview with The Associated Press. "And don't just take my word for it. Look at the findings of an independent arbitrator who saw all the evidence, sat through the testimony and laid the whole conspiracy out."

Tygart said Bosch's regimen included dozens of blood tests to see how the drugs were metabolizing and which doses to use when. It included peptides and female fertility drugs to supplement testosterone, human growth hormone and an insulin-like growth factor.

"At the end of the day," Tygart added, "this was a potent cocktail of sophisticated PEDs stacked to-

NHL Capsules

Continued from Page 18

Shea Weber scored in the first period, Craig Smith and Viktor Stalberg followed Ellis with goals in the third, and David Legwand had three assists to help Nashville snap a three-game losing streak. Carter Hutton stopped 22 shots for the Predators.

Lee Stempniak and Mikael Backlund scored and Karri Ramo made 30 saves for Calgary, which has lost four of its last five.

SHARKS 2, CAPITALS 1

WASHINGTON (AP) — Patrick Marleau scored the only goal of the shootout, lifting San Jose over Washington. Antti Niemi stopped Eric Fehr, Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom in the shootout after making 35 saves in regulation and overtime. Marleau tallied after Joe Pavelski missed on San Jose's first shot.

Ovechkin scored his league-leading 33rd goal at 12:44 of the second period after Tyler Kennedy had tallied for San Jose at 13:30 of the first.

The Sharks took the opener of a three-game road trip,

improving to 17-1 against the Capitals in the teams' last 18 meetings.

Rookie goaltender Philipp Grubauer, making his 12th start in 17 games, made 28 saves for Washington.

It was the Capitals' second straight 2-1 shootout loss and they have lost six of their last eight.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, BRUINS 3

BOSTON (AP) — Tyler Bozak scored twice and Phil Kessel had three assists as Toronto held off Boston.

Jonathan Bernier made 38 saves for the Maple Leafs, including 15 in the third period as the Bruins tried to rally after allowing three straight goals.

James van Riemsdyk's goal a minute into the third put Toronto up 4-2, and the Maple Leafs held on despite getting outshot 41-26. Jake Gardiner also scored for Toronto.

Brad Marchand and Patrice Bergeron each had a goal and an assist for Boston. Gregory Campbell pulled the Bruins to 4-3 with 10:25 left in the third period, but Bernier stopped a late flurry of shots after Boston pulled goalie Tuukka Rask



St. Louis Blues right wing Chris Stewart, left, gets a shot off as he is hit by Phoenix Coyotes left wing Lauri Korpikoski during the first period of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014, in St. Louis. The Blues won 2-1.

Associated Press

for the extra skater.

LIGHTNING 2, RANGERS 1

NEW YORK (AP) — Victor Hedman and Nikita Kucherov scored 9 seconds apart early in the second period and Ben Bishop made 33 saves in his return from injury as Tampa Bay ended New York's three-game winning streak.

Hedman got the Lightning even with a power-play goal and Kucherov gave them the lead for good on a breakaway. Tampa

Bay went 5-3 in a stretch in which it played seven of eight on the road.

Brad Richards scored for the Rangers and Henrik Lundqvist made 23 saves in taking the loss for New York, which was 8-2-1 in its previous 11. Bishop was back in action for the first time since he sprained his right wrist in the first period at Edmonton on Jan. 5. He missed three games before dressing as the backup to Anders Lindback on

Monday at Columbus. He didn't play in the Lightning's 3-2 loss.

FLYERS 4, SABRES 3

BUFFALO, New York (AP) — Vincent Lecavalier scored with 15 seconds remaining to cap a topsy-turvy finish, sending Philadelphia to victory over Buffalo.

Scott Hartnell had a goal and two assists, and Wayne Simmonds set up two goals in helping Philadelphia snap a two-game skid. Jakub Voracek also scored for the Flyers, who improved to 8-3 in their past 11 games.

Cody Hodgson and Matt D'Agostini each had a goal and assist for Buffalo, which had an eight-game home point streak snapped at 6-0-2. Tyler Ennis also scored and Steve Ott set up two for the Sabres.

In other NHL games it was San Jose 2, Washington 1, SO; Toronto 4, Boston 3; Tampa Bay 2, N.Y. Rangers 1; Philadelphia 4, Buffalo 3; New Jersey 4, Montreal 1; Florida 4, N.Y. Islanders 2; Colorado 3, Chicago 2, OT; St. Louis 2, Phoenix 1; Nashville 4, Calgary 2; Ottawa 3, Minnesota 0; and Dallas 5, Edmonton 2. □

Google builds a 'Nest' for future of smart homes

MICHAEL LIEDTKE
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)

— When our Internet-connected gadgets and home appliances all learn to talk to each other, Google wants to be at the center of the conversation. This imagined future is still a few years away, but Google is already preparing with its \$3.2 billion acquisition of high-tech thermostat and smoke-detector maker Nest Labs.

The surprise deal announced this week will provide Google Inc. with more tools to build a valuable hub for homes. It's a world of networked toasters and tea kettles, or a so-called "Internet of Things," that is destined to reshape society, experts say.

The research firm Gartner Inc. expects more than 26 billion objects to be connected to the Internet by 2020, a figure that doesn't include personal computers, smartphones or tablets. That would be a nearly 30-fold increase from roughly 900 million Internet-connected things in 2009.

Google is getting ready with the help of Nest Labs, a 300-employee company started less than four years ago. Tony Fadell, Nest's founder, is an Apple veteran who helped design the iPod and the iPhone.

As influential as smartphones have become, their role in understanding people's habits and preferences could be eclipsed once everything in the home has a computer chip and is connected to the Internet. "Google bought Nest in order to learn about this world where even more information is going to be accessible by computers," said Forrester Research analyst Frank Gillett.

Nest Labs quickly won over gadget lovers with its 2011 release of an Internet-connected thermostat that learns to cool and heat homes to suit the needs of the inhabitants. Late last year, the company followed up with a smoke and carbon-monoxide detector equipped with voice technology and the ability to communicate with the



In this Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2013, photo, Tony Fadell, Founder and CEO of Nest, poses for a portrait in the company's offices in Palo Alto, Calif. Associated Press

company's thermostat. Nest hasn't said how many of its devices have been sold, though analysts believe they are in just a small fraction of homes.

The products have only been available in the U.S., Canada and the United Kingdom. Google hasn't disclosed its specific plans for Nest, but analysts an-

ticipate an entire line of Internet-connected home products will be coming to countries around the world. Some of those Nest devices could be melded

with existing Google services in an effort to make people's lives easier. Such a move also would provide Google with the means to gather more insight that could be used to sell the digital advertising that generates most of the company's revenue.

In a blog post about the Google acquisition, Nest Labs co-founder Matt Rogers promised that customers' personal information will only be used for "providing and improving Nest's products and services. We've always taken privacy seriously and this will not change."

Google still makes most of its money from advertising tied to search requests. Acquiring and developing products with Internet connections and environmental sensors can only help Google get an even better grasp on people's interests. □

Report: NSA maps pathway into computers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Security Agency has implanted software in nearly 100,000 computers around the world — but not in the United States — that allows the U.S. to conduct surveillance on those machines, The New York Times reported Tuesday.

The Times cited NSA documents, computer experts and U.S. officials in its report about the use of secret technology using radio waves to gain access to computers that other countries have tried to protect from spying or cyberattacks. The software network could also create a digital highway for launching cyberattacks, the Times reports.

The Times reported that the technology, used by the agency for several years, relies on radio waves that can be transmitted from tiny circuit boards and USB cards inserted covertly into the computers. The NSA calls the effort an "active defense" and has used the technology to monitor units of the Chinese Army, the Russian military, drug cartels, trade institutions



In this Thursday, Oct. 31, 2013, file photo, a man looks at his cellphone as he walks on the street in downtown Madrid. The National Security Agency tracks the locations of nearly 5 billion cellphones every day overseas, including those belonging to Americans abroad, The Washington Post reported Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2013. Associated Press

inside the European Union, and sometime U.S. partners against terrorism like Saudi Arabia, India and Pakistan, the Times reported.

Among the most frequent targets of the NSA and U.S. Cyber Command, the Times reported, has been the Chinese Army. The United States has accused the Chinese Army of launching regular attacks on American industrial and military targets, often to steal secrets or intellectual property. When Chinese

attackers have placed similar software on computer systems of American companies or government agencies, American officials have protested, the newspaper reported.

The NSA says the technology has not been used in computers in the U.S.

"NSA's activities are focused and specifically deployed against — and only against — valid foreign intelligence targets in response to intelligence requirements," Vanee Vines,

an agency spokeswoman, said in a statement to the Times. "We do not use foreign intelligence capabilities to steal the trade secrets of foreign companies on behalf of — or give intelligence we collect to — U.S. companies to enhance their international competitiveness or increase their bottom line." Parts of the program have been disclosed in documents leaked by Edward Snowden, the former NSA systems analyst, the Times reported. A Dutch newspaper published the map showing where the United States has inserted spy software, sometimes with the help of local authorities. Der Spiegel, a German newsmagazine, published information about the NSA's hardware products that can secretly transmit and receive signals from computers, according to the Times.

The Times said that it withheld some of those details, at the request of U.S. intelligence officials, when it reported in summer 2012 on American cyberattacks on Iran. □

GM predicts modest pretax profit gain this year

DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors Co. said Wednesday it expects a modest gain in pretax profits this year as global sales growth slows.

The No. 1 U.S. automaker joined others in forecasting slower growth in the red-hot U.S. market. Still, GM and industry analysts expect sales to reach or exceed 16 million for the first time since 2007.

GM said it plans to use profits from the U.S. and China — now its largest market — to boost weaker parts of its business. For instance, it will spend an estimated \$1.1 billion to restructure its European operations.

"We're taking advantage of the strength in the U.S. and China to engage in other areas such as our international operations,"

GM's president, Dan Ammann, said on a conference call with reporters. Ammann said GM's restructuring costs should drop off significantly in 2015.

But the restructuring this year will mean flat profit margins, a development that concerned some analysts. In a research note, Barclay's analyst Brian Johnson said flat margins imply 2014 earnings of \$3.60 to \$3.80 per share, below his estimate of \$4.06. But Johnson said it's possible GM's new management team is being overly conservative to set the bar low.

Shares of GM fell 52 cents, or 1.3 percent, to \$39.50 in afternoon trading. That took some of the shine off Tuesday's announcement that GM would pay a dividend this year for the first time since 2008. But GM's outlook wasn't as concern-

ing to investors as Ford Motor Co.'s, which warned last month of lower pretax profit and pressure on pricing.

GM announced the outlook on its first day under new management. Mary Barra became GM's new CEO Wednesday, replacing Dan Akerson.

Ammann, the former chief financial officer, became president, while Chuck Stevens, the former CFO of North America, is GM's new CFO.

In a presentation at a Deutsche Bank auto conference in Detroit, Ammann says GM expects global industry sales to grow by about 2 percent this year to more than 85 million vehicles. That's slower than the 4-percent growth rate the company saw in 2013. In China, sales could slow if the government tightens

curbs on vehicle ownership to limit traffic and smog. Close to 18 million cars and light trucks were sold in China in 2013.

GM, Ford, Toyota, Nissan and others expect U.S. sales between 16 million and 16.5 million this year — implying an increase of 2.5 percent to 5.8 percent over last year's sales of 15.6 million. It would be the first time in five years that sales didn't rise by more than 1 million vehicles. Growth is leveling off as the U.S. approaches a healthy, pre-recession sales rate.

Ammann said GM's new vehicles should help it see modest market share increases in the U.S. and elsewhere. GM is launching 15 new or ungraded models in the U.S. this year, including the Chevrolet Colorado midsize truck and the Cadillac Escalade. □

US wholesale costs rose last month on gas

JOSH BOAK

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. wholesale prices increased in December, pushed up by rising gasoline prices and energy costs. But overall inflation remained mild. The Labor Department said Wednesday that the producer price index, which measures costs before they reach the consumer, rose 0.4 percent last month from November. That ends three straight months of falling wholesale prices.

Gas prices increased 2.2 percent after recent declines. Home heating oil costs grew at the fastest pace in 10 months, while diesel fuel prices increased at the biggest clip in almost four years.

Excluding volatile energy and food costs, so-called core prices increased 0.3 percent in December. That was partly because of a one-time bump in tobacco costs.

Over the past 12 months, overall prices have risen a modest 1.2 percent and core prices are up just 1.4 percent. Both are well below the Federal Reserve's 2 percent inflation target. Businesses have struggled to raise prices because of historically high levels of unemployment and meager wage growth. Low inflation has also allowed the Fed to pursue extraordinary stimulus programs to try and boost economic growth.

In December, prices for alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals and autos all rose. The 3.6 percent jump in tobacco prices caused by state and local government tax hikes.

Food costs fell 0.6 percent, led by a 13.4 percent drop in vegetables and declining prices for pork, chicken, beef and dairy products. The increase in gasoline prices reversed two months of sharp declines. Still, prices are relatively low.

Falling gas prices through much of 2013 has limited inflation. □

S&P 500 finishes above all-time closing high

BERNARD CONDON
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Standard and Poor's 500 index on Wednesday managed

stocks rose after Bank of America reported that its profit surged to \$3.44 billion in the fourth quarter. Apple was up nearly 2 percent.

fears. As of the close of trading Monday, the S&P 500 was down 1.6 percent. But a combination of positive economic reports

31, 2013. With Wednesday's rise, the index is now basically flat for the year. In 2013 the S&P 500 closed at record highs 45 times.

The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 108.08 points, or 0.7 percent, to 16,481.94. It is 94.72 points from its closing high, just one good up day away. The Nasdaq composite rose 31.87 points, or 0.76 percent, to 4,214.88.

The tech-heavy index is still 16 percent below its high during the dot-com bubble more than a decade ago.

Bank of America climbed 2.3 percent after it reported a jump in earnings. The loans on its balance sheet continue to improve, and the bank's provision for credit losses fell to \$336 million, from \$2.2 billion in the same period a year earlier. Even its mortgage division, which took huge losses after the housing bubble popped, improved.

Apple rose 2 percent, and Microsoft by 2.7 percent. On Friday, Apple plans to start selling its iPhone in China through China Mobile, the world's largest cellphone carrier. □



Specialist Philip Finale, right, works with traders at the post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange that handles Game Stop. The Standard and Poor's 500 index on Wednesday managed to eke out a record at the close, besting the old one by just two-hundredths of a point.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

to eke out a record at the close, besting the old one by just two-hundredths of a point.

Financial and technology companies had some of the biggest gains. Bank

Investors have been worried stocks would stall in the new year after a surge of nearly 30 percent in the S&P 500 last year. The first few trading days in 2014 seemed to confirm their

and strong earnings on Wednesday sent all three major indexes higher.

The S&P 500 gained 9.50 points, or 0.52 percent, to 1,848.38. The last closing high was 1,848.36 on Dec.

Bank of America 4Q earnings jump nearly five-fold

KEN SWEET

AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bank of America Corp. said Wednesday that its fourth-quarter profit jumped from a year earlier, as the loans on the bank's balance sheet continued to improve.

The second-largest U.S. bank earned \$3.44 billion in the October to December period, up from \$732 million a year earlier. On a per-share basis, the bank earned 29 cents, beating the 26 cents expected by financial analysts. Fourth-quarter revenue rose to \$22.32 billion from \$19.6 billion, exceeding analysts' forecasts of \$21.2 billion.

The bank's profits got a big boost because Bank of

America was able to significantly reduce the amount of money it holds on its bal-

ance sheet to protect itself from bad loans. The bank's provision for credit losses



In this Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2014, photo, a Bank of America sign is displayed in Philadelphia. Bank of America Corp. reports quarterly financial results before the market opens on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2014. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

ance sheet to protect itself from bad loans. The bank's provision for credit losses

fell to \$336 million from \$2.2 billion in the same period a year earlier. Even BofA's mortgage division, which took huge losses after the housing bubble popped,

improved. The number of mortgages that were delinquent 60 days or more fell 58 percent from a year ago. "We enter this year with one of the strongest balance sheets in our company's history," Bank of America Chief Financial Officer Bruce Thompson said in a prepared statement.

Like JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo, Bank of America saw a slowing in its mortgage origination business last year. Mortgage-originations fell by 46 percent in the fourth quarter from a year ago. Over the summer, mortgage rates started to rise, which stopped consumers from refinancing their home loans. Mortgage gi-

ant Freddie Mac said last week that the average 30-year fixed rate mortgage had an interest rate of 4.51 percent, compared to 3.35 percent in May of 2013.

Most of Bank of America's businesses saw profits improve or remain flat during the quarter. Its consumer and business banking division, by far BofA's biggest business, earned \$1.97 billion in the fourth quarter, up from \$1.45 billion in 2012. Since the financial crisis, Bank of America has been slimming itself down, cutting businesses and reducing headcount. The number of bank employees fell to 242,100 in the fourth quarter, from 267,200 employees in the same period a year ago. □

Hershey takes on fast-growing Nutella chocolate spread



This photo provided by Hershey's shows a new line of chocolate spreads, including a hazelnut variety reminiscent of Nutella, a spread made by the Italian company Ferrero. The company announced the new product on Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2013. (AP Photo/The Hershey Company)

CANDICE CHOI

AP Food Industry Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Hershey Co. on Wednesday said it was introducing a line of chocolate spreads, including a hazelnut variety reminiscent of Nutella, a spread made by the Italian company Ferrero.

The move points to the strong growth in the category; over the past five

years, sales of Nutella in the U.S. have more than tripled to \$240.4 million, according to market researcher Euromonitor International.

In 2012, J.M. Smucker Co. also got into the game with its Jif hazelnut spreads.

Hershey wants people to try putting the chocolate spread on a variety of

foods, saying in a statement that it's a "snack enhancer" for items such as graham crackers, strawberries, pineapples and even pickles.

Anna Lingeris, a Hershey spokeswoman, noted that the most common uses for chocolate spreads are pairings with fruit. But she says Hershey will feature the "endless possibilities"

for its spreads in national TV ads set to start airing on Monday.

"People are seeing the permission to try it on carrots and try it on celery," she said, noting that chocolate is "one of America's favorite snacks."

As for Nutella, fans use it in a variety of ways, with some even saying they just eat it straight out of the jar. Its site shows the spread in a wholesome light, on what appears to be a slice of whole wheat bread, alongside a fruit and glasses of orange juice and milk. Hershey's site meanwhile features a jar of its spread amid apples, strawberries, pretzels and celery.

Lingeris said Hershey's spreads have been available since early December, although national marketing is just now starting. The spreads have chocolate flavor, but aren't primarily chocolate. Nutella's ingredients, for example, include sugar, palm oil, hazelnuts, cocoa and skim milk. A call to the Ferrero's U.S. headquarters wasn't immediately returned.

Adding chocolate spreads clearly make fruits and vegetables more indulgent snacks, with two tablespoons containing about 200 calories, 12 grams of fat and 20 grams of sugar for both the Nutella and Hershey varieties. □

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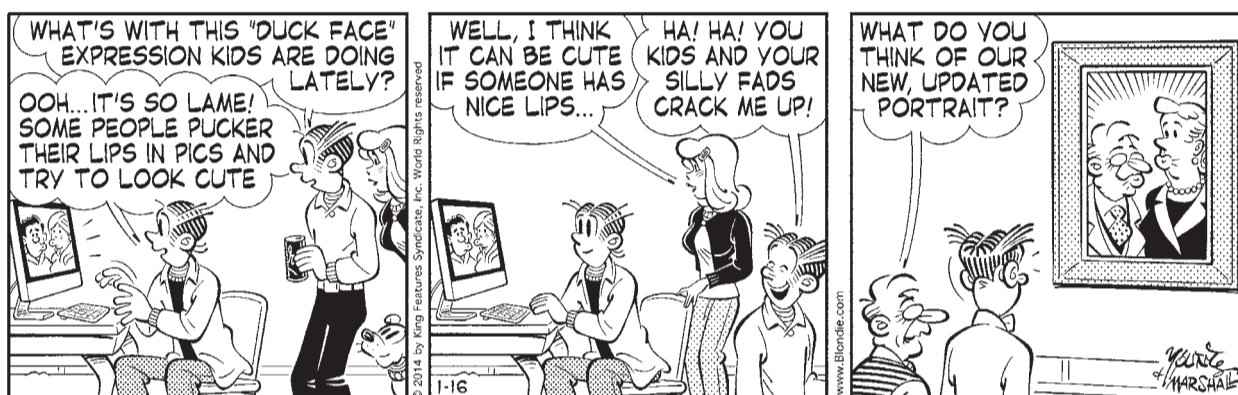
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			7	5				
	9	4		6		5	1	
	1						3	
8				3				4
	4						6	
9				7				2
	5						9	
	6	9		8		4	7	
			3	1				

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/16

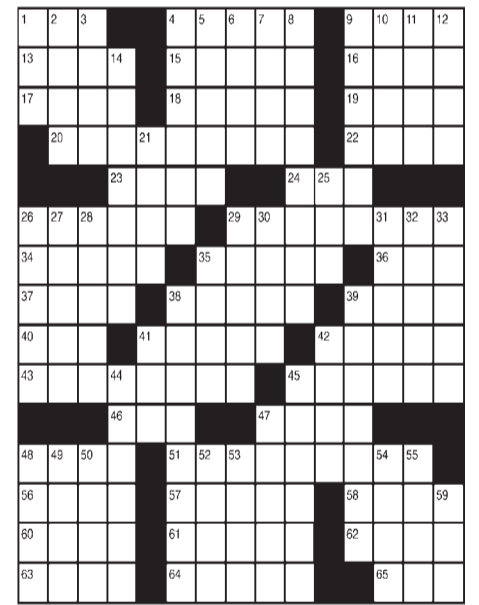
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

3	8	9	1	6	4	2	5	7
2	4	7	9	3	5	6	8	1
1	6	5	2	7	8	9	4	3
6	1	3	7	4	9	8	2	5
7	9	2	5	8	3	1	6	4
4	5	8	6	1	2	7	3	9
5	3	1	8	2	7	4	9	6
9	2	6	4	5	1	3	7	8
8	7	4	3	9	6	5	1	2

ACROSS

- Wife to Todd, Fisher & Burton
- Threaded metal fastener
- Ruin the plans of; thwart
- Follow orders
- Piece of garlic
- Go higher
- Intelligent
- Detests
- Woes
- Monthly mailing from the bank
- Peepers
- Frolic
- Take first place
- Fifth or Pennsylvania
- Eastern Time; EST
- Bekins, for one
- Deadly fish
- Cow's remark
- Grew gray
- Bawl out
- Cleansing bar
- Source of light and heat
- Thrill
- Drench
- Homesteaders
- Red suit
- Go quickly
- Scorch
- Tearful request
- Mainly
- Wander
- Sea duck with soft down
- Tidy
- Villain
- Parker House; bread items
- Wilder or Autry
- Puts on
- In; chic
- Music from Jamaica
- Learn by; memorize
- Break; neither gain nor lose money
- "Ho"; film for John Wayne
- Buddy
- Greasy
- of Capri
- Not as much
- Longed
- Sightseeing trip
- Pen contents
- Accumulate
- In; popular at the time
- In any; nevertheless
- Injections
- Story
- Love, in Paris
- Rump; cut of beef
- Idiots
- Mark left after surgery
- Pullman cars
- Flying high
- Cotton gin man
- Whitney
- Sweetheart
- River in England
- Coffin carrier
- One of the five senses
- Nudge
- Company symbol
- Deserve
- Street uprising
- In a lazy way
- Pinky & Spike
- Pull hard on
- and Sympathy



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

1/16/14

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

ELVES	STAB	SALE
NOISE	CAPE	ADAM
DANCE	ABED	NATO
SNEAKERS	BUDGET	
	PILE	AUSTERE
DEPEND	TIGER	
AVE	GENES	RANTS
NETS	RALLY	POUT
GREAT	SLEEP	OBI
	MASTS	MARKER
APLENTY	PERU	
ORANGE	BANISTER	
RICE	EPIC	ASIDE
TEES	RUDE	HEDGE
ADDS	SPED	STEED

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Study: Chimpanzees bond over shared meals

FRANK JORDANS

Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Chimpanzees who share are chimpanzees who care, it seems.

A study published Wednesday appears to confirm that friendships are forged at mealtimes, at least for our closest living relatives. Scientists from Germany, Switzerland, Britain and the United States have found that chimps who share



In this Oct. 31, 2005 file photo, chimpanzees play with a pumpkin with a Halloween face carved on it at Sydney's Taronga Zoo.
Associated Press

their food have higher levels of oxytocin, known as the love hormone, than those who don't. Oxytocin has previously been linked to bonding between mothers and their breastfeeding

babies, both in primates and humans. Researchers studying dozens of wild chimpanzees in Uganda found that the giver and the receiver of food had higher levels of oxytocin in

their urine, indicating that sharing is something that makes both parties feel good.

Roman Wittig of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, said chimpanzees had more than twice the level of oxytocin after sharing food than after mutual grooming — another important bonding behavior in primates. "We think food sharing can help spark new friendships, whereas grooming is more for confirmation of existing relationships," he told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. Julia Lehmann, an evolutionary anthropologist who wasn't involved in the study, called the results "very clear and highly significant." They appear to support the idea that food sharing can extend social benefits normally found in animals who are related to each other to those dining partners who aren't related, she said. In other words, the way to a chimp's heart is through its stomach. "I also find it very

interesting that the direction of the food sharing does not affect the results, i.e. it is not better to receive than to give — or the other way around — at least not in terms of oxytocin level," said Lehmann, an academic at Roehampton University in Britain.

The research was conducted on wild chimpanzees because researchers weren't sure that animals in captivity would react the same way to oxytocin, said Wittig. Their caution results partly from studies in humans, where children who grew up in institutions sometimes struggle to form normal bonds later in life.

While no studies have yet been conducted on oxytocin levels in humans after dinnertime, Wittig said the principle would suggest a similar effect.

"We've known for decades that human mothers and breastfeeding children both have an oxytocin surge. And if we consider breastfeeding to be a form of food sharing then there's a similar mechanism in humans." □



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Study: Birds fly in 'V' formation to save energy



In this undated photo made available by journal Nature on Jan. 15, 2015, northern bald ibises (Geronticus eremita) fly in formation next to a microlight aircraft.
Associated Press

MALCOLM RITTER
AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The next time you see birds flying in a "V" formation, consider this: A new study says they choreograph the flapping of their wings with exquisite precision to help them on their way. That's what scientists concluded after tracking a group of large black

birds, each equipped with a tiny GPS device to record its position and every wing flap. One expert in animal flight said just gathering that data was a remarkable accomplishment. Scientists have long theorized that many birds adopt a "V" formation for aerodynamic reasons. When a bird flies, it leaves a wake.

The idea is that another bird can get a boost from an updraft of air in that wake by flying behind the first bird and off to the side. When a group of birds use this trick, they form a "V."

It's been difficult to study this in the wild. Researchers from the University of London's Royal Veterinary College and elsewhere studied 14 ibises as they migrated between Austria and Italy. The birds had been taught to follow an ultralight aircraft as part of a conservation program.

An analysis of a seven-minute period showed that when the ibises flew in a "V," they positioned themselves in just the right places to exploit the updraft in another bird's wake, which lets them conserve their energy. They also appeared to time the flapping of their wings to take full advantage of that updraft, by making a wingtip follow the same undulat-

ing path through the air as the wingtip of the bird up ahead. And when one bird flew directly behind another instead, it appeared to adjust its flapping to reduce the effects of the wake's downdraft. So birds can either sense or predict the wake left by their flock mates and adjust their flapping accordingly, the researchers said.

The scientists reported their results online Wednesday in the journal Nature. It's the first experimental evidence that birds can adjust their flapping to take advantage of the wake, Florian Muijres and Michael Dickinson of the University of Washington wrote in an accompanying commentary. Kenny Breuer of Brown University, who did not participate in the work, said collecting the study data from the free-flying birds was "quite an astonishing feat." □



This Jan. 10, 2014 file photo shows Trace Adkins at the All My Friends: Celebrating The Songs and Voice of Gregg Allman tribute in Atlanta.

Associated Press

Country singer Adkins enters alcohol rehab

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) — Country singer Trace Adkins has entered alcohol rehab. Adkins' publicist tells Country Weekly and confirms to The Associated Press on Wednesday that the singer entered rehab after consuming alcohol during the Country Cruising cruise. The 52-year-old "Celebrity Apprentice" winner has canceled the remainder of his performances

during the weeklong cruise that wraps up Sunday after stops in Jamaica, Grand Cayman and Mexico. There were no other details available. An email to Norwegian Cruise Lines seeking information was not immediately returned. Wynonna, Montgomery Gentry and Love and Theft were among the other acts performing aboard the NCL Pearl with Adkins. □

'Justified' actor calls on Elmore Leonard's memory

LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer PASADENA, California (AP) — Walton Goggins says he relied on the memory of Elmore Leonard to help him through a tough day on the set of TV's "Justified." Goggins, who plays Boyd Crowder on the crime drama, described a chair left empty on the set after the author died in August. "Justified" has its roots in Leonard's colorful fiction. When he struggled with one scene, as Goggins described it Tuesday to the Television Critics Association, he decided, "'I'm just going to sit down in your chair, Leonard.' ... Without getting spiritual, it was very

special, very comforting." When those involved with "Justified" look back on the show, "it will be a big deal to say you were part of a literary giant's career," Goggins said. Timothy Olyphant, who stars as Deputy U.S. Marshal Raylan Givens, said the writer's memory is not oppressive. "I love the man. He's going to be greatly missed," Olyphant said. But, he added, "I don't feel it hanging over the show. I feel blessed to be able to do the show, and he got a kick out of it." "Justified" is airing its fifth season and will end after season six, the producers and FX confirmed. □

Billy Bob Thornton says TV's a haven for actors

LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer PASADENA, California (AP) — Billy Bob Thornton said actors who want to work on sophisticated projects are finding them in television and not film. He's proving the point with a starring role in the upcoming FX series " Fargo," inspired by the 1996 Joel and Ethan Coen movie. Thornton told a Television Critics Association meeting Tuesday that while Hollywood studios churn out action movies, broad comedies and "movies where apparently vampires are all models," TV offers the kind of insightful work once common in films. He says that's why peers

like Kevin Costner, Dennis Quaid and Kevin Bacon have turned to television. "The entertainment business can pretend all they want, but the movie world has changed drastically, particularly in the last five or six years," said Thornton, who won a best-screenplay Oscar for "Sling Blade" and was nominated for his role in the 1996 film. "If you want to be an actor, get on a really good series in television because there's where it's at," said Thornton, whose neatly groomed hair contrasted with striped pants decorated with buttons, embellished cowboy boots and a sleeveless black T-shirt that showed numerous arm tat-



Billy Bob Thornton arrives at the Fox All-Star Party on Monday, Jan. 13, 2014, at the Langham Hotel in Pasadena, Calif.

Associated Press

toos. "Fargo" also stars Martin Freeman of "Sherlock" and the "Hobbit" films. It debuts in April on FX. □

CW: 'Veronica Mars' spinoff planned for online



In this Aug. 23, 2006 file photo, actress Kristen Bell appears on the set of the television series "Veronica Mars," in San Diego.

Associated Press

PASADENA, California (AP) — The CW says it's developing an online spinoff of the "Veronica Mars" series. Series creator Rob Thomas has agreed to do the digital version, CW President Mark Pedowitz told a meeting of the Television Critics Association on Wednesday.

The decision to proceed with the spinoff was made Tuesday and details have yet to be worked out, including the cast and characters, the CW said. "Veronica Mars," which was cancelled in 2007 after three seasons, is enjoying a resurgence. A film based

on the show about a crime-solving teen, played by Kristen Bell, was funded by the crowd-funding site Kickstarter. The movie is due out in March. A debut date for the online spinoff was not announced. □

Stewart, Gordon-Levitt, Moss Sundance-bound

JESSICA HERNDON

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — As Kristen Stewart, Elisabeth Moss and Joseph Gordon-Levitt have learned, the Sundance Film Festival in the mountains of Utah is the ideal destination to get away from it all and work on that career shift.

Robert Redford's two-week celebration of independent cinema kicks off its 30th year Thursday in Park City, Utah, with a lineup that includes 117 feature films. One of them is "Camp X-Ray," in which Stewart plays against type as a Guantanamo Bay guard who befriends a prisoner. Stewart, who was last at the festival in 2010 when she was promoting her role as Joan Jett in "The Runaways," says "Camp X-Ray" was one of the rare scripts she'd read that made her want to work again after her two-year acting hiatus following the "Twilight" movies.

"At my age it's difficult to find stuff that isn't completely derivative," said the 23-year-old in a recent interview. "Most parts are imitating something else that was popular."

With "Snow White and



In this Jan. 18, 2013 file photo, director, writer and cast member, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, left, poses at the premiere of "Don Jon's Addiction" during the 2013 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah; and this photo provided by the Sundance Institute shows Elisabeth Moss, left, and Mark Duplass, right, from the film, "The One I Love," premiering at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival.

Associated Press

the Huntsman 2" coming in 2015, Stewart's big-budget franchise days are far from over. "But it's a little bit more difficult to create the environment that I thrive in on a bigger movie," she explains. "I prefer doing smaller ones. They're quicker. I like intensive things and then I like to walk away."

For Gordon-Levitt, persistence has paid off. This will be his seventh consecutive

year at Sundance and he'll be presenting the first three episodes of "HitRecord on TV." It's the cable TV extension (airing on the Pivot network) of his HitRecord.com, a website dedicated to giving artists a platform to share and develop their work.

"HitRecord started at Sundance in 2005 in a way," says Gordon-Levitt. "But it was more of an informal hobby." Then, in 2010, it



was launched at Sundance as an official production company.

Gordon-Levitt says the fest "feels like a home away from home," which made it the perfect place last year to debut his first feature film, the porn addiction tale "Don Jon."

Looking back on a whirlwind year full of "HitRecord on TV" development and the success of his acclaimed debut feature,

Gordon-Levitt says TV has required far more effort than film.

"Everybody already knew what to do and how to do it on 'Don Jon,'" he says. "Whereas, with making a television show with hundreds of thousands of artists from all over the world who are uploading their work on the Internet, there isn't much of a precedent of how you go about that. But it's been so rewarding." Other actors and filmmakers have also picked Sundance as their coming out party. Last year, little-known actor Michael B. Jordan's popularity spiked when he starred in the fest's jury prize winner, "Fruitvale Station." And noted documentarian Alex Gibney, returning this year with "Finding Fela!," has been attending the festival for years.

Back at Sundance with two films this year, "Mad Men's" Elisabeth Moss stars in "Listen Up Philip," a New York-based comedy about an angry writer (Jason Schwartzman) anxious for the publication of his second novel. Moss also stars in "The One I Love," in which she and Mark Duplass portray a married couple on the brink of separation hoping to reconnect on a weekend getaway.

In comparison to her role as Peggy Olson on AMC's "Mad Men," both films "have really different sensibilities," said Moss in a phone interview. It's an especially appealing factor for Moss, who shot the films during "Mad Men's" hiatus. "I wanted to explore things that were closer to my every day."

But that doesn't mean she'll pass on another killer TV role. "There's something very fulfilling about developing a character over a period of years," she says. "But I like to do films because you do it for a few weeks or a few months and then you move on."

Moss' last trip to Sundance in 2012 was to promote the Sundance Channel miniseries "Top of the Lake." Her performance won her a best actress Golden Globe award on Sunday night. □

Chris Pine criticizes Russia's anti-gay law



Chris Pine poses in the press room at the 71st annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, Jan. 12, 2014, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press

RYAN PEARSON

AP Entertainment Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)

— Chris Pine says the U.S. should have done more in the run-up to the Sochi Olympics to protest Russia's anti-gay legislation, which he calls "clearly awful, archaic, hostile nonsense."

"I think we should do more than just send gay Olympians there," the 33-year-old actor said in an interview while promoting his film "Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit." "What's happening there in terms of gay rights or the lack of it is extraordinary and awful."

Pine's character tries to thwart a terror attack on the U.S. that originates in Russia and takes on a powerful Russian tech magnate

in his new movie, opening Friday. It's based on the late author Tom Clancy's work but doesn't revolve around the plot of any single book.

The Ryan character, portrayed in previous films by Alec Baldwin, Harrison Ford and Ben Affleck, was originally a CIA operative working during the Cold War. The new Ryan faces a different landscape.

"It's not like the Bay of Pigs where nuclear war is going to start at the drop of a hat. At least it's not there," Pine said of current U.S.-Russia relations. The Russian law on "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations among minors" was signed into law by President Vladimir Putin last year. □

Washington's Thunder Road



MAUREEN DOWD
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WASHINGTON - I have learned two things covering politics. One, first impressions are often right. John Edwards is slick. Hillary Clinton is expedient. W. was in over his head. Barack Obama is too much in his head. Chris Christie can be a bully.

Politicians are surrounded by spinners who work tirelessly to shape our perceptions of the characters of their bosses. Pols know how to polish scratches in their image with sin-and-redemption news conferences, TV confessionals and self-deprecating turns at hoary Washington press banquets. As Jimmy Carter spokesman Jody Powell joked, if Hitler and Eva Braun came on stage at the Gridiron Dinner and mocked themselves in a song-and-dance routine, Washington chatters would say, "Oh, they're not so bad."

After being showered with spin, you say to yourself, maybe that first impression was wrong. But often it isn't.

Christie's two-hour "I am not a bully" news conference was operatic about an act of malice so petty it did not merit being called "authentic Jersey corruption," as New Jersey native Jon Stewart said, adding that it was unworthy of a state with a severed horse head on its flag.

If you're going to wage a vendetta, at least make it a well-thought-out one. How can Christie & Co. run a national campaign when they can't even aim straight? How moronic to think the mayor of Fort Lee would get blamed for problems on a bridge that everyone knows is controlled by the Port Authority. If you want to be malicious, it would be so easy to put a project close to the mayor's heart on hold for a few months or redirect 60 state snowplows the night before a storm.

The governor groveled to New Jersey residents after his aides so gleefully burned them (even joking about children being late for the first day of school because of the orchestrated gridlock on the George Washington Bridge).

After zapping Obama for being so clueless that he couldn't find "the light switch of leadership" in a dark room, Christie is trying to salvage his once blazing career by claiming he was in a dark room, clueless to the bogus traffic study masking a revenge plan that top aides were executing in plain sight.

The epic news conference felt like a scene out of the governor's favorite movie, "The Godfather": Christie offering his tremulous, grandiose, self-pitying public apology while in cross-cut scenes,

his henchmen were getting rid of those who threatened his operation.

Calling his deputy chief of staff Bridget Anne Kelly "stupid" and "deceitful," he threw her off the bridge, without talking to her himself or, as Niall O'Dowd slyly wrote in IrishCentral.com, even extending the courtesy of the old Irish wedding night admonition: "Brace yourself, Bridget."

He also disappeared his two-time campaign manager, Bill Stepien. His cronies at the Port Authority, Bill Baroni and David Wildstein, fell on their swords last month.

Christie took a line straight out of the Robert DeNiro handbook, lamenting: "I am heartbroken that someone who I permitted to be in that circle of trust for the last five years betrayed my trust."

Yet we know workplaces are chameleon-like. I once had a publisher who loved the Audubon Society, so we ran a lot of bird stories. I had another boss who wore suspenders, so guys in the office started wearing suspenders.

Shades of Watergate: Since they were headed toward a landslide, you'd think the Christie crew would have been in a more benevolent mood. But given the governor's past flashes of vindictive behavior, this was probably a wink-wink, nod-nod deal. Question: Who will rid me of this meddling mayor? Answer: The "little Serbian" has been dealt with.

The second thing I've learned from covering politics is that we can debate ad nauseam whether Christie was telling the truth, shading it or bluffing. But we can't gauge that from his impressive, marathon Trenton performance art.

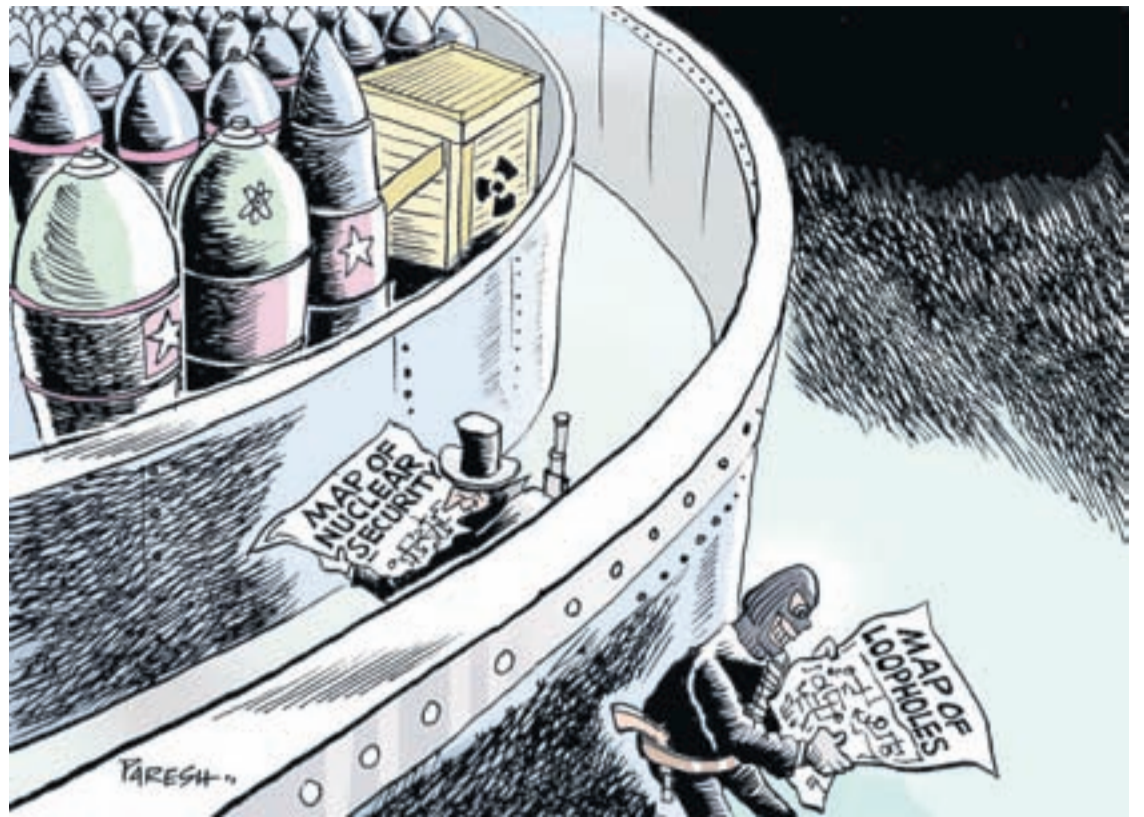
No matter how jaded we feel in the news business, we are still suckers for the big lie. It's tough to wrap your head around a stunning level of duplicity.

I learned this lesson the hard way covering Paul Tsongas' presidential surge in 1992. When The Times' Dr. Larry Altman came on the campaign trail to interview Tsongas, he was skeptical about the candidate's claim that his lymphoma had not recurred. I told Altman it was impossible for me to believe that Tsongas, who prided himself on his honesty and who was so straightforward he was mocked as "Saint Paul" by Clinton aides, could lie about that - especially given the profound political consequences.

Altman was right, as Tsongas later admitted. The candidate and his doctors at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston repeatedly said he was cancer-free when he was not.

A cascade of subsequent outraged denials about transgressive behavior delivered with bravado and finger wagging, from Gary Hart to Bill Clinton to John Edwards to Anthony Weiner, has persuaded me that politicians - who are narcissists and, in essence, actors stuck in the same role - can persuasively tell the big lie if they believe their futures are on the line.

The Christie saga is still unraveling. Maybe he was a dupe in the dark. Maybe the man in the fleece jacket is fleeing us. Let's just say, I'm not yet permitting him in my circle of trust. □



The World Wide War On Women



ROSS DOUTHAT
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The year is new, but we already have a candidate for the most troubling magazine essay of 2014: Amanda Hess on "Why Women Aren't Welcome on the Internet," in the latest issue of Pacific Standard.

Hess takes a reality many people may be only dimly aware of - that female writers come in for an extraordinary amount of abuse online - and fleshes it out with detail, data and personal experience. The anecdotes, her own and others, range from the offensive to the terrifying, but there's also a thudding, soul-crushing sameness to them: graphic threats of sexual violence, rape and murder, intertwining and repeating.

Everyone who writes online comes in for abuse, but Hess' essay describes a form of intimate attack that few male journalists experience. We hear about it over drinks, we catch glimpses of it on Twitter, but it's easy for us to miss how radically different it makes our female peers' experience.

Hess' essay is mostly interested in solutions and responses: how women should deal with their harassers; how online forums should police abuse; how the laws surrounding stalking and discrimination might adapt to deal with online threats.

But it's also useful to think about root causes, and where all the hate and twisted fantasies are coming from. Is this misogyny always latent in a subset of the male population, or are there magnifying forces at work? One potential magnifier, of

course, is the Internet itself, which by its nature is a kind of unreal space for many users - a place where a range of impulses can be discussed, explored and acted out in what feels like a consequence-free zone.

There is some evidence that the emergence of this fantasy space has actually made the real world slightly safer for women: Studies have shown correlations between access to online pornography and lower rates of sexual assault. But the flip side is that many men who might have successfully regulated their darker impulses now have what seems like a green light to be "virtually" abusive ... because they're just trying out a role, or because the woman on the receiving end seems no more real to them than a character in a pornographic film.

Another magnifier is ideology. Hess is a feminist who works in culture-war terrain, and there's no question that women writing from that perspective come in for more personal, sexualized abuse than women writing about, say, monetary policy. Where the personal is political, the political becomes personal more quickly, and the grotesque abuse that liberal, feminist writers can receive for being liberal feminists is a scandal that conservatives, especially, need to acknowledge and deplore.

But many conservative and libertarian women also take a remarkable amount of sexual-political abuse. So it may be that the culture war cuts both ways, and a certain kind of left-wing narrative about gender - in which women are expected to hold liberal views just by virtue of being female - can become a license for allegedly progressive men to demean and dehumanize women who decline to play that part.

And then to further complicate matters, there is the phenomenon of intraliberal misogyny - like the flood of abuse, cited by

Hess, that greeted the atheist writer Rebecca Watson when she wrote about sexism and harassment at a skeptics' convention.

Cases like Watson's suggest that there's a chauvinist attitude in play here, a kind of crypto-ideology of sex and gender, that doesn't map neatly onto what we usually think of as culture-war divides. This attitude is "liberal" in that it regards sexual license as an unalloyed good, and treats any kind of social or religious conservatism as a dead letter. But at the same time it wants to rebel and lash out against the strictures it feels that feminism and political correctness have placed on male liberty, male rights.

Sometimes this rebellion is just coarse and libertine: think of lad magazines, or the world of pickup artists, or Seth MacFarlane on Oscar night. But where it intersects with status anxieties, personal failure and sexual frustration, it can turn vicious - in effect, scapegoating women (those frigid castrators, those promiscuous teases) for the culture's failure to deliver a beer-commercial vision of male happiness.

I don't think either the left or the right quite understands this worldview: Feminists tend to see it simply as a species of reaction, social conservatives as the dark fruit of sexual liberation, when it's really a combination of the two. And because it channels some legitimate male anxieties alongside its chauvinism and resentment, it probably can't be shamed or driven underground - or not, at least, without making its side effects for women that much more toxic.

Instead, it needs to be answered, somehow, with a more compelling vision of masculine goals, obligations and aspirations. Forging this vision is a project for both sexes. Living up to it, and cleansing the Internet of the worst misogyny, is ultimately a task for men. □

Karolina Kurkova Is Walking on a Bigger Runway

BOB MORRIS

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The crowd in New York's Central Park had swelled to 60,000 as Karolina Kurkova, the Czech fashion model and former Victoria's Secret Angel, waited backstage at the second Global Citizens Festival, a star-studded concert last September. Scheduled to go on after Alicia Keys and her performance of "Girl on Fire," Kurkova sang along with gusto from the wings.

After the applause died down, she stepped out in front, statuesque in a white Proenza Schouler leather skirt and Manolo Blahnik stilettos. Her blond hair whipped as she leaned into the microphone and spoke with the brio of a cheerleader and the confidence of a politician.

"Hello global citizens, the world is on our shoulders," she called out.

After introducing Janelle Monáe, she hit the VIP tent with Archie Drury, her husband, and their 4-year-old son. She yelled hello to Russell Simmons and Amy Sacco, and hugged Gayle King. She goofed around with fans, stealing their caps and mugging for selfies with them. Then it was on to Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general of the United Nations, whose office had arranged a photo op. She greeted him like family.

"You're so tall," he said.

"And I'm not even wearing my heels," she replied.

Perhaps not, but she is definitely flying high these days. Kurkova wants to be more than just another pretty face who has graced countless magazine covers. With a budding TV career and a regular presence on the charity circuit, her fame now extends beyond the runway, and she is poised, as Anna Wintour once said, to be the "next supermodel" and a bigger celebrity.

In an industry with looming expiration dates, Kurkova, who turns 30 in February, appears here to stay. She has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, has

worked on sitcoms and reality shows, lunches with royals, walks runways and red carpets, and was on People magazine's "Most Beautiful" list in 2004. Even those who don't know the difference between Prada and Pucci may recognize her from NBC's "Tonight Show With Jay Leno," where she is a playful and regular guest. "Jay knows I'm fun," she said. "I always want people to have a good time."

Clearly word has gotten

other models. Beyond her towering physique, aquiline nose and perfect credentials, Kurkova also showed that she had charisma and a bubbly, witty and disarmingly gracious personality. She was game for anything. Soon, she was getting speaking roles on NBC's "Chuck" and "30 Rock," and CBS's "Person of Interest," as well as the 2009 action film "G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra." She also co-starred last year in "The Face," Oxygen's reality

committee lists including the Novak Djokovic Foundation, New Yorkers for Children and the Semper Fi Fund.

Every move is considered and many meetings are taken in a crucial career moment that requires both pollinating and mining for gold.

"Models need to be more proactive these days," said Scott Lipps, the founder of One Management, who handles her career. He noted that she had started to

five who appears on NBC's "Fashion Star," agreed. "Karolina wants to do more, which is why she's everywhere," he said.

Everywhere is putting it mildly. Last winter, when Jay Z needed a co-host for his party after his Carnegie Hall benefit, he asked Kurkova. When someone was needed to sit next to Prince Harry at his polo charity event in Connecticut in May, she was there to kiss and chat. The next week, she was towering



The model Karolina Kurkova in New York. With a budding TV career and a regular presence on the charity circuit -- her fame now extending beyond the runway -- Kurkova moves between her numerous pursuits with confidence.

(Elizabeth Lippman for The New York Times)

around. As Kurkova said, "I'm the girl who gets asked to do things."

Kurkova's career took off with appearances on runways and in advertising campaigns for Valentino, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Versace and Christian Dior. Mario Testino called her a model who could "fit into any moment." Marc Jacobs noted her "angelic look with a dark side." In the first few years of her professional modeling career, she ended up on 52 magazine covers and was named model of the year at the 2002 VH1/Vogue Fashion Awards.

But there was something else that set her apart from

show about modeling, but left after one season. Insiders assume she couldn't handle Naomi Campbell, the show's star, who called her a "complete idiot" on the air. Kurkova doesn't comment. But last year, Leno pushed her on the air about working with the notorious, phone-throwing supermodel.

"Being the mom of a 3-year-old prepared me for a lot of things, I guess," she said with a sheepish grin.

"Meow," Leno shot back. In addition to TV, she now appears with socialite regularity on the charity circuit, not just as red-carpet eye candy, but as a presenter and member of various

focus on her social media presence substantially, with nearly 168,000 Instagram followers, up from 15,000 a year ago. "Karolina is a real businesswoman who knows she has to tap into pop culture."

Her husband, Drury, 42, is a former Marine with the looks of Tom Cruise and a reported interest in Scientology. He helps with strategy, as does her publicity agency, Rogers & Cowan. "The important thing is to do everything to ensure your staying power," said Rod Aissa, an Oxygen executive who is producing a second season of "The Face." Terron Schaefer, a Saks Fifth Avenue execu-

over actresses on the red carpets of Cannes as a "friend" of the Swiss watch company IWC Schaffhausen. In September, at the U.S. Open tennis tournament, she hit the Moët & Chandon VIP suite before sitting with Kate Upton in the private box of Djokovic. Right after that, she was omnipresent during Fashion Week in New York, walking the runway for Michael Kors and posing with Jim Carrey at the Marchesa after-party, and then in Milan, where she could be spotted on runways and on guest lists of events like the amfAR benefit for AIDS research and a Condé Nast charity concert at La Scala. □